Reading Kafka in Prague: The Reception of Franz Kafka between the East and the West during the Cold War

Veronika Tuckerova

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
2012

Abstract

Reading Kafka in Prague: The Reception of Franz Kafka between the East and the West during the Cold War

Veronika Tuckerova

This dissertation explores the transmission, reception, and appropriation of Franz Kafka in Czechoslovakia during the Cold War, against the background of the contemporary international readings of Kafka, especially in West Germany.

The first chapter examines Paul Eisner's translation of the *Trial* in the context of his influential triple "ghetto theory" and from the perspective of his contemporary translation discourse as well as recent translation theories. The second chapter focuses on the reception of Gustav Janouch's *Conversations with Kafka,* and the reasons why this controversial text was welcomed in the West and dismissed in the East as a forgery. The chapter uses new archival discoveries about Janouch and discusses questions of witness and testimony. The role of "witness" took an ominous turn in the case of Eduard Goldstücker, who is the focus of the third chapter. Goldstücker was tried in the Slánský show trials in the early 1950s and forced to testify against Slánský. The chapter explores how Goldstücker attempted to come to terms with his past through reading of Kafka. The secret police files that were kept on him provide new insights on Goldstücker's published texts, public persona, and the Liblice Conference that succeeded in rehabilitating Kafka in 1963. The last chapter examines the *samizdat* publications of Kafka's works. This chapter spans the 1960s to the 1980s underground culture and examines the appropriation by Ivan Jirous of the "ghetto" topos and Kafka for the Czech Underground.

I address the following topics: the status of witness as a legitimization of an “authentic” reading, censorship, the interplay between politics and literature, and the construction of authorship.

Table of Contents

Credits and Acknowledgments

I wish to thank my dissertation advisers Andreas Huyssen and Mark Anderson for encouraging me to pursue research about the reception of Franz Kafka in Czechoslovakia, for their trust, and comments.

Veronika Ambros was an excellent host during my short stay at the University of Toronto in the Spring 2006; I wish to thank her for engaging discussions, which initiated the topic of the readings of Kafka in Czechoslovakia. The following people shared with me generously their memories and insights: Petr Brod, Josef Čermák, Peter Demetz, Ivan Dubský, Ivan Martin Jirous (+2011), Alexej Kusák, Jiřina Šiklová, Peter F. Neumeyer, Josef Škvorecký (+2012), Magda Ševčíková, Jan Šulc, Jindřich Toman, and Paul Wilson. I thank Jiří Gruntorád of Libri Prohibiti in Prague for his assistance during my research at their samizdat collections, and the staff at the Národní archiv (National Archive), Literární archiv Památníku národního písemnictví in Prague, and Archiv bezpečnostních složek Ministerstva vnitra (Archive of the Security Forces of the Ministry of Interior) in Prague.

My research was supported by a Faculty Fellowship from Columbia University (2005-2011) and by a DAAD fellowship (2008-2009). I thank Professor Hans Dieter Zimmermann for inviting me to be a Fellow at the Technische Universität in Berlin. Professor Joseph Vogl from Humboldt Universität generously discussed with me the further contexts of my research.

During my research stay in Prague, I enjoyed the opportunity to teach at New York University's Prague campus a class on "Kafka and his Contexts." The course enabled me to read Kafka's works anew; during our walks with students, I also learned to appreciate Kafka's Prague. I thank Jiří Pehe, Thea Favaloro, and Magdaléna Platzová for this invitation.

I presented chapters of my dissertation at various conferences and speaker series, including the German research colloquium at Queen's University, Belfast (2007), the CUTG at the University of Nottingham (2008), the conference "Kafka und Macht, 1963-1968-2008" in Liblice (2008); at OSA Archivum in Budapest (Beyond Cold War

Linearities: Entangled Histories and Interactive Ideas, 2009), the speaker series at *Společnost Franze Kafky* in Prague (2009), the conference "Kafka und Prag" at Goethe Institut in Prague (2010), the Czech Workshop at Columbia University (2011), and the ICLS Colloquium at Columbia University (2011). I greatly benefitted from comments at these diverse occasions.

A version of the second chapter was printed as the Afterword in the first Czech edition of *Conversations with Kafka*. I thank the publisher Viktor Stoilov and the editor Jan Šulc, for entrusting me with writing it, and to Marek Nekula for his useful comments.

Finally, I wish to thank my family and friends in Prague and in New York. I especially thank Avi for discussing the topic with me in the early stages of my writing, during our walks along the Irish Sea, and to my mother for creating a special bond with my daughter Sophia, born during chapter two, in the first year of her life in Prague.

Introduction: Reading Kafka in Prague

This dissertation explores the transmission, reception, and appropriation of Franz Kafka in Czechoslovakia during the Cold War, against the background of the contemporary international readings of Kafka, especially in West Germany. I focus on four pivotal figures in the transmission and reception of the author in Czechoslovakia: Kafka's Prague contemporary, the essayist and translator Paul Eisner (1889-1958), the controversial author of *Conversations with Kafka*, Gustav Janouch (1903-1968), the former scholar and diplomat and key figure of the conference on Kafka in Liblice, Eduard Goldstücker (1923-2000), and Ivan Martin Jirous (b. 1944), the main figure of the 1970s-1980s Czech underground, who produced samizdat, typescript copies of Kafka's, in the early 1960s, a time when Kafka's works were not widely available.

I use the term Cold War in the title, though I use Communism more frequently, because in the Czech context, the word Communism was much more prevalent. Cold War (*studená válka*) was reserved for official propaganda in the media; the term emphasizes the international, East-West conflict. (Blaive 2009) I use the term Cold War intentionally to allow some distance from the Czech context, and introduce a broader, European and trans-Atlantic perspective that allows seeing the reception of Kafka in Czechoslovakia as part of a broader discourse. In line with contemporary writing about Cold War culture, I emphasize exchange and communication

rather than the impenetrability of the Iron Curtain. The Iron Curtain was more porous than is usually assumed. (Ackermann, 2000)

The study of the reception of Kafka under Communism has "vertical" and "horizontal" dimensions. The vertical dimension is that of coming to terms with the past, the Stalinist past in Czechoslovakia. The Liblice Conference and 1960s debates over politics and literary interpretation were about the immediate past. Horizontally, I follow the international debate among the Eastern Bloc countries, and the debate between them and the politically defined "West," most notably West Germany, France, and Austria. The study of the reception of Kafka in Czechoslovakia under Communism reveals the disjointedness of the narratives in Czechoslovakia and the "West".[1] The existing critical narrative told by Western scholars accentuates moments such as the 1963 Liblice Conference on Kafka, when Kafka was cautiously brought into the public realm at the beginning of liberalization. Moments such as this one correspond to the political developments in the country; the official reception of Kafka was possible during the brief periods of liberalization. The Liblice conference is valued as the key event in introducing Kafka to Eastern Europe. A fascinating picture emerges; it is striking that an author – or, more precisely a construction of an author and the body of his work – could play such a significant role in the cultural politics of the late 1950s and the early 1960s. The Kafka debate stood for the debate about Modernism, and the debate about Modernism stood for a much larger political and cultural conflict about change, reform, and liberalization in post-Stalinist

[1] Terms "West" and "East" have been contested, as they simplify the more complex relationships and delineations. Czechs consider themselves to be Central Europeans. I nevertheless use the Cold War terms West and East as they capture the assumptions, characteristics, projections and tensions between the two blocs.

Eastern Europe, the thawing of the status quo. Kafka is often understood as the shibboleth of cultural de-Stalinization in Eastern Europe. (French, 1982, Bathrick, 1995)

In the case of Liblice, the Western liberal reception met with the Czech reception. Western scholars and public sympathized with the tentative and cautious steps of reform-minded Marxists such as Eduard Goldstücker to claim Kafka for socialism and enable him to enter the East European public realm. Critics such as Goldstücker based their relevance of Kafka for socialism on the claim that alienation also persisted under socialism. Goldstücker's opinions coalesced with the arguments of Ernst Fischer and Roger Garaudy to expand the notion of realism to include the modernists. Otherwise, many mutual misconceptions persisted. Incongruity between the East and the West is apparent in the case of Janouch's contested *Conversations with Kafka*, which was received with more sympathy and tolerance by Western critics than by their Czech colleagues, who dismissed the text as a falsification early on.

A few striking dates illustrate the delayed reception of Kafka in Czechoslovakia. Kafka's complete *oeuvre* was published in Czech for the first time as late as 2007, a peculiar situation if we consider that the very first translation of Kafka's work to any language was Milena Jesenská's translation of „Der Heizer" (1920) into Czech. The first Czech translation of *The Trial* by Paul Eisner was published in 1958, although Eisner had already translated the novel during the Second World War. Janouch's controversial and problematic though influential *Conversations with Kafka* appeared for the first time in Czech in 2009, although their author, Gustav Janouch, lived in Prague for most of his life. Without a doubt, the reception of Kafka after the Second World War was marked by absences. Kafka's works appeared on the list of prohibited books after 1948. He was not published officially between 1948 and 1957, nor again

in the period of so-called normalization after the Soviet invasion in 1968, until 1989. There was only a single exception: the 1983 reissue of a second edition of Kafka's stories (deemed less problematic by the authorities than *The Trial*), which had been previously published in 1965.

In this dissertation, I combine historical and archival research with literary analysis. I address the topics of testimony/witness, mediation, censorship, authority, and authorship. Eisner and Jirous engaged, each in a distinct way, in a cultural mission of transmitting Kafka to Czech readers. Goldstücker was mainly viewed as assisting in the introduction of Kafka to Eastern Europe by the Western critics. The role of Janouch is most controversial and ambiguous; he fits into the overall picture because of the theme of authenticiy, legitimity, authorship, and authority that his *Conversations* raise in a very poignant and specific way.

I ask whether Kafka was read differently in Czechoslovakia than in the West. The reception of Kafka in West Germany, with its Marxist, existentialist and structuralist readings, was considered more diverse than in the East. (Esselborn 1980, 460-469) This assertion however betrays a simplified perspective of Western critics. In Czechoslovakia, on the other hand, Kafka was perceived as a uniquely non-ideologial writer, as„Inbegriff des nichtideologisierten, ausserhalb der politischen Propaganda stehenden Seins." (Václavek 1993, 239) Jiří Stromšík (1992) argued that Kafka had a special significance for readers who lived in a totalitarian society. Unlike the French and German readers of the 1940s and 1950s, who read Kafka's texts symbolically, „als Aussagen über den *Sinn* der Existenz", the Czech readers of the 1960s read them „quasi-realistically," they „confronted" the texts with their everyday experiences; the texts were for them „Aussagen über konkrete *Erscheinungsformen*." (Stromšík 1992) But was this perspective uniquely East-European? Did the Czechs indeed read Kafka differently than the

readers in the West? I attempt to answer this question by examining interpretations of Goldstücker, Eisner's translation, and Janouch's *Conversations*.

Despite the gaps and disruptions, there were also continuities in the reception of Kafka. Even when Kafka was not published officially he continued to exist in the realm of unofficial publication and culture, in samizdat, as well as in the broad realm of popular reception. But I also show that the continuity of Kafka reception does not limit itself to the unofficial samizdat realm. An interesting discovery of this research was that an unlikely cultural/interpretive continuity existed from the democratic, multi-lingual 1920s to the Stalinist, provincial, and anti-Semitic 1950s: in the figure of "ghetto" that was used metaphorically, with several transformations. Eisner's thesis of the insularity of Prague German Jewish authors giving rise to writers such as Kafka reappeared, secularized, in the second half of the 1950s, in the articles of Eduard Goldstücker, Pavel Reiman, and Čestmír Jeřábek. This is surprising if we consider the dramatic political and social change that followed the 1948 communist coup, and it attests to the conservative nature of cultural transmission that does not necessarily react to the political and social disruptions. The figure of ghetto emerged again in the 1970s' underground culture, in Jirous' „Report on the Third Czech Musical Revival" (1975), the founding text of the Czech underground; the community lived in the voluntary seclusion of the "merry ghetto." My argument here fits recent trends in the historiography of the "everyday" in totalitarian societies, according to which, there was never total control and revolutionary rupture in all aspects of life in a short period of time, as some older historiographic approaches assumed. Even in a totalitarian state with an extensive and powerful secret police, there can be spontaneous cultural activity, free of state control. (cf. Crowley & Reid, 2002)

The discussions of samizdat during the last ten years have attempted to move beyond the previous narrative of samizdat that had been viewed in sharp contrast, as an opposition, to the unreliable, distorted, censored, Soviet official print. The focus on the material aspect of samizdat (Komaromi, 2008) led some scholars to contrast samizdat (with its mistakes, pseudonyms, and disregard for authorship) with modern Western print, with its standardization, dissemination, and fixity. Original and inspiring as this approach may be, I argue that samizdat was varied and included many publications that practiced very rigorous editorial controls, comparable to the standards of modern print. The reason for not publishing the names of authors was simply that it was enforced by the special circumstances of Communist surveillance. I argue that 1970s and 1980s samizdat publications are comparable to modern print. Jirous's earlier typescripts (from the 1960s), due to their limited dissemination, cannot be considered publications similar to modern print, yet they fulfill a similar function in maintaining cultural continuity.

State of Research

The existing literature in Czech on the reception of Kafka in Czechoslovakia comprises an overview of the publication history of Kafka's works. (e.g. Čermák, 2000) Articles were published about the 1963 Kafka conference in Czechoslovakia (Kusák 2003, Hughes 1977), mostly by those who had attended the event. The story of Kafka's manuscripts after Max Brod smuggled them from Czechoslovakia is also well documented. While critical studies of the reception of Franz Kafka in East Germany have appeared in the last two decades, similar research is missing for Czechoslovakia. (Winnen 1993, Fingerhut 1985, Erbe 1993) A

comprehensive study of the Czech reception, which would combine literary-history with more theoretical concerns as well as a study that would compare the German (East and West) and Czech perspectives, is missing; a lacuna that is not, upon reflection, surprising.

The fact of Communist censorship is not sufficient to explain all the gaps in the Czechoslovak postwar reception. Kafka, due to his complex national identity, did not fit any of the literary categories as they emerged in Central Europe. Kafka fell between the disciplines, German and Czech nationalistically defined literatures, and between the politically, rather than geographically defined East and West. Prague *Germanistik* in the interwar period paid hardly any attention to the writer, as Eisner and Goldstücker attest. During Communism, a few Czech *Germanists* worked on Kafka and his fellow German-Jewish Prague authors (the „Prague Circle", to use Brod's term) only to the extent that the topic was favored by political circumstances, i.e., in the 1960s, and then again in the 1990s after the Cold War. Contemporary Czech scholarship lags behind in areas that were prohibited before 1989, and in times of voluntary collective amnesia (Mayer, 2004); it is not interested in interdisciplinary research that questions the complexities of recent history. Czech scholars of German literature from Bohemia and Moravia deplore the almost exclusive focus by their foreing colleagues on the „famous trio" Kafka, Werfel, and Rilke. They criticize the „Pragocentric" focus on *Prager deutsche Literatur* (a term established in 1965 at a conference *Weltreunde*, organized by Goldstücker) of the international *Germanisten* and historians, and prefer to delve into lives and works of the lesser known authors from Bohemia and Moravia. West German scholars did have the freedom to study Kafka, but they only had limited access to his Czech literary, cultural and social context.

In contemporary Prague, Kafka remains peculiarly absent. Czechs did not appropriate Kafka's works in constructing their new, post-communist, European identity. The Czech authors to be published in massive print runs after 1989 were the former exile and *samizdat* authors: Václav Havel, Ivan Klíma, Pavel Tigrid, or Josef Škvorecký. Kafka did not become part of the newly revised canon of Czech literature, although in bookstores in Prague's Old Town he is the only author of *Prager deutsche Literatur* whose books (in German or English) are in Czech literature sections. Kafka was relegated to the status of a tourist attraction. With the significant exception of the 2007 publication of Kafka's collected works in Czech by the Franz Kafka Society (established in Prague in 1990), it is hard to suppress the provocative complaint by the Czech exile *Germanist* Rio Preisner who translated Kafka and wrote about him, and who claimed that the Czechs have not read or understood Kafka. Preisner was after all Czech, too.

The present is propitious for researching the topic: the archives are opening, and some of the direct witnesses are still alive. The time that elapsed since the end of Communism is a sufficient distance to allow looking back. We can benefit from a number of recently published memoirs by the participants of the Kafka conference, for example those by Eduard Goldstücker (1989/ 2003, 2005 in Czech), Alexej Kusák (2003), Klaus Hermsdorf (2006), and Werner Mittenzwei (2004), or people who had firsthand experience with the 1930s and post WWII reception of Kafka in Czechoslovakia, such as Peter Demetz (1996). We can benefit from some new literary-historical research that is currently available only in Czech and that has become possible after the Czech archives were made accessible following the end of Communism. To some extent, we can research the archives of the publishing houses that published Kafka during Communism, although some were destroyed, and some have not yet been catalogued. We can

benefit from new research based on archival materials documenting the Communist Party meetings where decisions about the Kafka conference were made. For the purpose of this dissertation, I interviewd Josef Čermák, Ivan Dubský, Alexej Kusák, Ivan Martin Jirous, and Jiřina Šiklová, among others.

I examine a broad range of primary and secondary sources; many of them not critically examined earlier, some others only in Czech. Most notably, I examine critically for the first time samizdat publications and archival documents from the Czechoslovak Secret police and Military Intelligence (*Archiv bezpečnostních složek*) on Goldstücker and Janouch. I analyze Eisner's translation of *The Trial*, its first in Czech (published 1958), which has not been considered critically before. In the chapter on Janouch, I discuss Czech critical sources so far ignored in international literature.

The wealth of materials to which I have gained access has also enabled me to examine how the holders of Communist power "read" Kafka: the peculiar remarks about Kafka made by President Antonín Novotný in his diaries, as well as the essays and testimonies that reveal the interest in Kafka by the Secret Police. In these "readings," Kafka also served as a code. The state organs, including the censor's office, targeted words such as "Kafka" and "Liblice" to monitor potential subversive activities by people who might have been interested in marking Kafka's centenary; they did not care about Kafka per se.

Should Kafka be considered a Czech author? Siebenschein and Demetz (1947) pointed out the connections Kafka shared with his Czech environment. To various degrees, all four figures analyzed here claimed a special access to Kafka, which they legitimized by their physical

closeness to Kafka's milieu. This holds most significantly for Eisner, who argued that Kafka was "explicable only in terms of his Prague, and thus only by means of an intimate knowledge of circumstances which are unique and will never recur again." (Eisner 1950, 6) Janouch had an even more direct link to Kafka, as one of the very few people living in the early 1950s who personally knew him. Janouch professed himself a witness. He legitimized his *Conversations* by this status. Goldstücker built on Eisner's thesis, and in Liblice he called for interpretation of Kafka „aus Prager Perspektive". Similarly, the sociologist and dissident Šiklová, once a student of Goldstücker, wrote in her letter from prison that texts that discuss the „effect of Kafka on society" can originate only in Prague, Kafka's birthplace. ("That can only come into existence here, in Kafka's city and birthplace") Jirous justified his claim to Kafka by the need to continue his cultural mission aimed at overcoming the unavailability of Kafka's work. The link between Kafka and Prague was important for the underground community, which revered Jirous as its leader.

The connection of each of the four figures to Kafka is not just geographic or cultural but also autobiographic. Autobiography forms a part of each chapter, foregrounded to different degrees. In Eisner's case, his own bilingualism and ideas about *symbiosis*, the coexistence of Czech and German cultures and languages, helped to shape both his interpretation of Kafka and his translation. Goldstücker's Secret Police investigators wrote his detailed *vita* (contained in his personal file) noting the moments in his life that could be used to compromise him. The life of this Kafka scholar has been read as if scripted by Kafka; Goldstücker remained evasive about his own past experiences with the Communist judicial system and the 1950s show trials. Goldstücker's continual ambiguity about his own past is made even more apparent by his choice

of titling his memoir *Prozesse* (1989), in clear reference to Kafka's novel. Gustav Janouch's biography contains gaps, but he surely led a tumultuous life, reflecting the radical changes in postwar Europe. Janouch's life, as we know it on the basis of archival materials, as well as on the basis of Janouch's own remarks in the Preface to *Conversations*, is in striking contrast to the image of the saintly, quiet, and wise Kafka Janouch constructed it in his book. We can speculate whether Janouch, by writing *Conversations*, tried to reduce the gap between the insecurity of his own life and the calm wisdom and moderation that his construction of Kafka is imbued with. Janouch's biography can also shed some light on the popularity of the author in the West and his early rejection in Czechoslovakia: Czech readers might have known more of his possible entanglement with the Secret Police, and certainly would have cared more. Jirous's life is relevant for understanding the consistency between his samizdat editions of Kafka's works and his personal attitude during the 1970-1980s "normalization", when Jirous was revered as a leader of the Czech underground community. Both in his samizdat and his Report, in which he quotes Kafka, he engaged in a cultural mission, the creation of cultural continuity and the overcoming of provincialism in the ironically self-imposed "merry ghetto" of the Czech underground. The choice of Kafka's aphorism manifests the sort of personal integrity that Jirous and other samizdat figures saw in Kafka.

Translators as mediators between cultures were not as highly regarded in the past as they are today. I borrow the term used by Venuti (1994), who argued against the „fluency" of translation and for visibility of translators, to consider the „visibility" of the four figures who assisted in transmitting Kafka's works to the Czech audience. All the mediators of Kafka's work that I examine were visible to some degree. Visibility/invisibility serves as a useful figure in

characterizing their role in transmitting Kafka's work. The traditional role of translators was to make themselves invisible, to suppress their role in their service to the author they were making accessible, putting to light. (Koelzsch, 2009) But this metaphor can be extended much further in case of Eisner and Jirous. Eisner was making himself literally invisible while he translated *The Trial* in hiding during the war, though he was certainly a visible translator of Kafka's in the sense of Venuti's term. The authors of samizdat editions of Kafka's works such as Jirous were „invisible" as they were hiding their activity not to expose themselves and their friends. Goldstücker discussed Kafka cautiously, not to draw much attention to the author *vis a vis* the official Stalinist establishment, almost to make Kafka and himself invisible. As the authors of the reports in Goldstücker's personal file claim, Goldstücker made himself invisible in the years after he was released from prison. Janouch made himself visible in the West through his *Conversations*, but he remained unknown in Prague, where he lived most of his life.

Czech Readings

In his study of the reception of Kafka, Shimon Sandbank characterized Kafka's texts as "inherently open-ended, fragmentary, and truncated," (Sandbank 1989, 2) echoing Wolfgang Iser's reception theory which presumes the "openness of the text." According to Sandbank, there is a crucial gap at the level of theme: the fictive world in Kafka's fiction is divorced from any final meaning in the real world. Reception theory (Jauss 1969, 1982, Iser 1970, 1976, Vodička 1998) is useful in considering the Czech readings of Kafka. What kind of mindset, or "Erwartungshorizont" (Jauss 1969) did the Czech readers bring to Kafka's texts? Did the

Western Europeans experience them differently, and when? The West German critics, familiar with readings of Kafka as a prophet of Nazi totalitarianism, assumed that the East Europeans would read Kafka similarly. But they did not, or only later; rather than finding in Kafka an abstract notion of totalitarianism, they seemed to recognize in Kafka's fiction their everyday life, especially in the 1970s and 1980s.

Reception theory describes the complementary function of the reader and the text; the reader completes the text. The Czech readers were completing Kafka's texts, filling the gaps, constructing a meaning through their engagement with the past and present in totalitarian society. For example, Alexej Kusák at the Liblice conference read straightforwardly the recent Stalinist persecutions and the era's pervasive opaqueness through the prism of Kafka's fictional universe, asserting that the word "process" for twelve years stigmatized our reality". (Kusák 1966, 175). Goldstücker avoided making such connections, but his 1963 interpretation was very reductive when he interpreted the figure of the stoker in Kafka's novel as symbol of the working class. Only later, in 1968, Goldstücker suggested a more modern interpretive approach. He acknowledged a more complex view of what is "reality," and credited Kafka with an ability to see beyond its face, its surface. Attempts to depict reality by describing its surface failed; nineteenth-century realism is no longer capable of expressing the complexities of contemporary reality. Goldstücker's ideas are then somewhat closer to those later interpreters who read Kafka non-mimetically. (E.g. Thorlby, 1976)

The Czech readers shared with their West German counterparts some underlying constructions of authorship. Janouch echoed Brod's model of an author-prophet, who is constructed as larger, more important than his work. Goldstücker rejected the notion of Kafka as

a prophet. Eisner's reading was on the one hand similar to that of Brod, in that he also read Kafka metaphysically (in his 1957 article, and in his Afterword to *The Trial*, 1958); on the other hand he criticized the Western interpreters' lack of familiarity with Prague and promoted a socio-historical reading of Prague German Jewish authors. Klaus Wagenbach (1958) and Deleuze and Guattari (1975) clearly echoed Eisner's interest in Kafka's milieu.

The four figures I study present distinct reading situations. While Eisner read Kafka's works and actively sought to promote him in the Czech context, Janouch professed that he chose not to read some of Kafka's crucial works in order to preserve intact his memories of his interlocutor, Kafka the person. Goldstücker came to read Kafka late, intrigued by the Stalinist dismissive standpoint to Kafka, the official attitude towards him as a "decadent bourgeois author." Jirous presents yet another reading situation, as he read Kafka's works in the course of copying them in the early 1960s on a typewriter to make the rare texts available to his circle of friends.

Goldstücker, Šiklová, and Jirous, were public intellectuals whose word had bearing; they wrote letters from prison or a Report (Jirous) for their respective communities. They were contesting the authority of the state over an interpretation/control of what should be permitted and printed – although in different ways and capacities, often from different and divisive political standpoints. Goldstücker acted from within the state, trying to shift the lines just ever so slightly. Jirous, ignoring the authority, chose to live in voluntary seclusion in the underground. In samizdat culture, authors mattered, but the standards of authorship were often not adhered to as closely as in modern print culture.

Order and Content of Chapters

Each chapter focuses on a figure and particular theoretical problem, and formulates a distinct approach of literary transmission and reading/not-reading/interpretive practices: through translation (Eisner), imagination/fabrication (or something like "imitation") (Janouch), encoding and decoding (Goldstücker, Šiklová), and copying (Jirous, samizdat).

The first chapter examines Paul Eisner's translation of *The Trial* (created during the WWII, published 1958), the first translation of the novel into Czech, against the background of Eisner's influential "ghetto theory" developed between the 1920s and 1950s to interpret Kafka and Prague German literature. Eisner's concept of triple ghetto, social, national, and religious, which generated writers such as Kafka, is strongly present in Deleuze and Guattari's concept of minor literature, although the French authors do not refer directly to Eisner, but received the ideas through Wagenbach's 1958 monograph about Kafka. An early promoter and translator of Kafka, Eisner translated *The Trial* while he was in hiding, making himself "invisible", during the Second World War. The chapter examines Eisner's translation in light of his contemporary translation discourse as well as from the perspective of recent theories of translation, and reflects on the usefulness of concepts such as "foreignization" and "domestication." I argue that Eisner was not an "invisible" translator in Venuti's sense; his translation reflects both his bilingual predicament and personal struggle living with "two mother tongues", Czech and German, as well as his active engagement with Czech language during the time when he worked on the translation of *The Trial*. The chapter also demonstrates the surprising continuity in the literary

interpretation from the democratic Czechoslovakia in the 1920s to the Stalinist 1950s: Eisner's figure of the ghetto, secularized, resonated in the critical essays of the Marxist critics of the 1950s.

The second chapter focuses on the well-known *Conversations with Kafka* by Gustav Janouch, Kafka's contemporary and acquaintance. Dismissed as "fabrication" and "forgery" by Czech scholars Goldstücker and Čermák, the *Conversations* were nevertheless continuously quoted as an authentic source of Kafka's words. The chapter considers this paradox. I introduce some new archival material both biographical and relating to Janouch's construction of *Conversations*. I explore the concepts of memory, testimony and witness as useful analytical categories in considering the controversial text. This chapter critically examines the existing literature of Czech provenance about Janouch and addresses the question of disjointedness of reception in Czechoslovakia and in the former West.

The status of "witness" took an ominous turn in the case of Eduard Goldstücker, who is the focus of the third chapter. An important scholar of Kafka and the first Czechoslovak ambassador to Israel, Goldstücker was tried in one of the 1950s show trials connected to Josef Slánský, and forced to testify against Slánský. The chapter explores how Goldstücker attempted to come to terms with his past through the reading of Kafka's works in his articles, public speeches, and eventually in his 1989 memoir. The secret police files on Goldstücker that I found in the Archive of Security Forces in Prague provide new insights into his published texts and public persona. Goldstücker was a key figure in the 1963 conference on Kafka in Liblice, which is credited with introducing Kafka to Eastern Europe. Goldstücker's prevarications about the Stalinist legacy and his own past, his cautious treading around the topic of Kafka, are set against

an argument expressed by Jiří Stromšík (1992): that Kafka had a special significance for readers who lived in a totalitarian society. The chapter introduces the topic of reading Kafka as a prophet, of both Nazi and Communist totalitarianism. It lays out similar readings by West German critics and examines the question of whether Kafka was read in similar way by Goldstücker, and when.

The fourth and last chapter focuses on the presence of Kafka in Czech samizdat culture in the early 1960s and during the so-called normalization period of the 1970s and 1980s, a topic that has not been discussed before. I examine typescript copies produced by Ivan Martin Jirous, the use of Kafka as a code in prison and in conspiratorial dissemination of exilic and samizdat texts, in a letter from prison by Jiřina Šiklová, among other materials. I critically engage with recent scholarly writings about samizdat (e.g. Komaromi 2008, Steiner 2008, and Machovec 2008) and argue that samizdat publications should not be viewed in a sharp contrast to the modern print and its standards. The authors of typescript copies of Kafka's works such as Jirous engaged in a mission to maintain cultural continuity, and the sometime non-standard practices of samizdat regarding authorship were simply rational and unavoidable precautions and subterfuges to protect the texts and their anonymous authors, editors, translators, and typists. This chapter complements the previous chapters by showing the presence of Kafka in the periods when he was not published officially. It revises the standard narrative of the reception of Kafka in Czechoslovakia that emphasizes political disruptions over cultural continuities. I demonstrate that underground, a continuous undercurrent stream of Kafka reception, appreciation, scholarship and interest continued to flow, unaffected by the vagaries of political censorship and official culture.

Chapter I

Translator's Visibility: Pavel Eisner's Translation of *The Trial*

There are two, or rather three, published translations of Kafka's *Trial* into Czech.[2] The first Czech translation of the novel came out in 1958. The translator was Pavel/Paul Eisner (1889-1958) who based it on Max Brod's edition of the novel (Kafka 1953). In 1965, a revised version of Eisner's translation by his daughter Dagmar Eisnerová was published; both Eisnerová and Eisner are credited as translators. In 1997, the scholar and translator Josef Čermák translated *The Trial* as part of the Czech edition of Kafka's collected works in thirteen volumes, the first full edition of Kafka's work in Czech. His translation was based on the critical edition of the novel. (Kafka 2002b) While translations of Kafka into English, as well as to French, Chinese and Japanese, have been critically examined, there is no similar analysis or comparison of the different translations into Czech.[3] This is a curious lacuna; the Czech translations of Kafka's works are important not only because of Kafka's fairly good knowledge of the Czech language and his familiarity with Czech literature, but also because of the importance of the writer to Czech culture and politics. This chapter attempts to fill this gap by examining Eisner's translation of *The Trial* and the readings of the novel in Eisner's translation in the context of 1950s and 1960s Czechoslovakia.

The Trial was translated, but also in a sense transmitted, to the Czech language and culture through Eisner, who originated in Kafka's Prague, though not quite from the same

[2] One is a substantial revision of an older translation.
[3] The few exceptions are Josef Čermák's article about the Czech translation of the story „Der Heizer" by Milena Jesenská and *Der Verschollene* (Čermák 1989) and Věra Koubová's (2000) remarks on her translations of Kafka. I will return to these articles later.

milieu. Unlike Kafka, Eisner studied in both Czech and German schools and was bilingual in both languages. Eisner did not belong to the close circle of Kafka's friends. He began as a translator from Czech to German. Czech became Eisner's dominant language around 1930. Kubka (1959) and Krolop (2007) attributed this shift to Eisner's reaction to the political developments in Germany.[4] The bilingual condition, Eisner's "two mother tongues," became a dominant theme in the writings of this prolific translator, essayist, journalist, and author of several books about the Czech language. Eisner is valued today mainly as a mediator between the Czech and German cultures, who introduced Czech readers to such authors as R. M. Rilke, Franz Kafka, and Thomas Mann, among others.

The reception of Eisner's work is marked by absences: he is not well known among Western scholars; the Czech reception of his work followed the general trend of suppressing authors of German Jewish origin who did not become Communists. Eisner's works were republished only after 1990, when his name also started appearing in scholarly articles about Kafka. (E.g. Josef Čermák, 2000) There is another reason for Eisner's persistent marginality: the role of translators and mediators between cultures used to be valued more instrumentally than it is today. (Koeltzsch 2009)

Paul/Pavel Eisner's translation of *The Trial* originated during the Second World War, but was published for the first time in 1958. Eisner was an early promoter of Kafka. (Krolop 2007, Čermák 2000) In an undated letter to Otokar Fischer (1883-1938), professor of German at Charles University and an important translator whom he had advised earlier to read Kafka,

[4] František Kubka (1959, 109) states briefly: "From a German writer he became a Czech one." 109. Kurt Krolop (2007, 9) notes: „Um 1930 verschob sich der Schwerpunkt der Mittlertätigkeit Eisners von Übersetzungen tschechischer Texte ins Deutsche zunehmend auf die Übertragung deutscher Literaturwerke ins Tschechische."

Eisner wrote that Kafka deserves "ten Nobel prizes." Krolop (2007, 9) speculates that the note may have been occasioned by the 1929 Nobel Prize awarded to Thomas Mann.

Between the 1920s and 1950s, Eisner developed a distinct and influential reading of the author. First, I discuss Eisner's theory of the triple ghetto, a socio-historical interpretation of the phenomenon of Prague German literature (Prager deutsche Literatur)[5] that Eisner developed as a critical response to what he termed "speculative" interpretations of the author. This theory exerted a great influence on Kafka scholarship and on the understanding of Prague German literature. Second, I examine Eisner's translation of *The Trial* in the context of his interpretation of Kafka, and the wider translation discourse of his times. Third, I explore the ways Eisner's interpretation of Kafka influenced the 1950s and 1960s readings of Kafka in Czechoslovakia, though Eisner himself remained marginal.

By examining Eisner's translation of *The Trial* in the context of his essays about Kafka, I engage with the question of Eisner's role as a mediator. Eisner claimed to have had access to Kafka's world; he legitimized his theory by this perceived privileged access. I examine how this perceived access to Kafka's world shaped both Eisner's theory of triple ghetto and his translation of *The Trial*. I will attempt to trace how Eisner's linguistic self-identity shaped his theorization of Kafka and how it affected his translation.

[5] A term that became a subject of scholarly studies in 1965 conference „Weltreunde" on the Prague German Literature, organized by Eduard Goldstücker in Liblice.

I. Eisner's Ghetto Topos and its Traces

In his essay, *Kafka and Prague*,[6] Eisner (1950) described the situation of Prague German Jewish writers:

> And so the Prague German lived 'as if' existence in air-tight space. He was 'German,' but around him there were no German people, no naturally constituted national community, and he rejected the provinciality of the 'Sudetengau' just as much as it rejected him. (…) But in the eyes of the Czechs, the German Jew was a stranger in three senses: as a Jew, either owing to creed or to unmixed blood; as a generally comfortable, prosperous and, often enough, rich citizen, in the midst of a crowd of proletarians and small bourgeois; and thirdly, as a "German.' No wonder the glance the Czechs cast on Prague German Jews was askance. For the Prague German Jew was precisely the embodiment of a completely foreign way of life. (Eisner 1950, 35-36)

These lines sum up Eisner's theory of triple ghetto. Eisner criticized the speculative nature of interpretations of Kafka both by foreign and Prague critics and claimed that they all seem to "hang in the air." Eisner drew attention to the place of Kafka's origin. Kafka, argues Eisner, is "explicable only in terms of his Prague, and thus only by means of an intimate knowledge of circumstances which are unique and will never recur again."(Eisner 1950, 6) The Prague German Jewish authors of the generation up to the outbreak of the First World War lived, according to Eisner, in triple ghetto: religious, national and social. (Eisner 1950, 21) This "triple ghetto" found expression in the work of writers such as Kafka.

Eisner developed his sociological/historical interpretation of Kafka in several articles and essays from the 1920s to 1958; his thesis remained strikingly unaltered over three decades. His two best-known essays on the topic are from 1948 (published in the journal *Kritický měsíčník* edited by the Czech critic Václav Černý and in English translation in New York in 1950), and from 1957, in the journal *Světová literatura (World Literature)*. My quotation is from the 1948

[6] This is a translation of an essay published in Czech in 1948 in *Kritický měsíčník* 9, (1948), 66-82.

essay in which Eisner elaborated most extensively on the ghetto topos; the quotation above is from this essay and captures, in a most succinct way, Eisner's main argument.

Significantly, Eisner describes German Jews from a Czech perspective ("in the eyes of the Czechs"). This grounded perspective is usually ignored in discussions of Eisner's concept of ghetto; the focus is simply on the "insularity" of the Prague German Jewish community, on "island," on the separation from German territories and on the poverty of the Prague German language as if Eisner had the privileged view of an ultimate outsider. But there is no view from nowhere. The perspective or point of view comes into the foreground if we ask: Who perceives the insularity? Eisner assigns this perspective to the Czechs. But who is Eisner? How does he know the Czech perspective? Eisner's essay from 1948/1950 curiously reveals his "double" identity: as a German Jew, he perceived the insularity, but was also able to step out from that environment and glance at it from the outside as a "Czech." Eisner was acutely aware of his position as someone living in both worlds (if they can be viewed as separate), or rather in neither of them fully.

Eisner's is a surprisingly harsh judgment on his fellow German Jewish writers that seems to echo some of the traditional non-racial anti-Semitic accusations against the Jews. Eisner blames the German Jews for choosing to live in this ghetto, for their insularity, their "desire to be different, an intentional strangeness, a willfully assumed position of foreignness and hostility." (Eisner 1950, 36) The terminology that he uses is that of sickness, un-naturalness, and absurdity. The German population of Prague was never an "organic" and "normal" society. (Ibid, 19) "To this Ghetto with invisible walls the German Jew in Prague attached himself. He had wandered off from the religious Ghetto; now he was stuck fast in one that was national and social." (Ibid,

21) Eisner's rhetoric in his 1948/50 essay betrays anger and exaltation, as if a different attitude could have spared this community their destruction. After the end of the war, the "flight" from the ghetto, the motif of Eisner's earlier writings, disappeared as no longer relevant. (Binder 2000, 25)

Complementary to Eisner's idea of ghetto is his biologistic notion of symbiosis. At the very beginning of his 1930 book, *Milenky* Eisner states: "The fate of this country is symbiosis." (Eisner 1992, 11) This is a normative and declarative rather than descriptive statement: according to Eisner, neither Czech nor German literature provides any evidence of this symbiosis. Czech authors yield a schematic image of Germans, and vice versa. Both literatures "disliked the inherited strangeness, traditional unfamiliarity and national repulsion of the other environment, all the invisible barriers that divide the intimate life of both tribes." But there is, according to Eisner, an important exception: the depiction of Czech women in the writings of the Czech German authors. The Prague Jewish poet instinctively looks to Czech women as a way out of the "ghetto inside him." (Eisner 1992, 20) Eisner imagined the Czech language as a woman, and the German man having an erotic relationship with her: "The Czech language too is a seducer, a go-between and breeder of erotic glory. A language not the most melodic and flattering among the European languages, a language without a great reputation for its beauties; but a language that gives to woman a grammatical attribute of gender and sexuality (…)."(Ibid, 16) The Czech language became increasingly a subject for reflection for Eisner, especially during the Second World War, when he wrote several books on the subject while also translating Kafka's *Trial*.

The Topos of Ghetto in the Writings of Other Authors

Before outlining the influence of Eisner's concept on subsequent critics through its traces in their writings, and discussing criticisms of Eisner's work, I would like to note that Eisner was not the first and only one to use the ghetto topos/metaphor.

Karl Kraus wrote mockingly about Kafka's circle from Prague's Café Arco. Kraus used the metonymy "Getto" to allude to the aspiring Prague German Jewish writers, and the alliteration with an ironic effect, Goethe-Getto:

> Solchem Wesenswandel wehrt kein Veto,
> hin zu Goethen geht es aus dem Getto
> in der Zeiten Lauf,
> aus dem Orkus in das Café Arco,
> dorten, Freunde, liegt der Nachruhm, stark o
> liegt er dort am jüngsten Tage auf. (Mühlberger 1981, PAGES)

„Der Jüngste Tag," was a series published by Kurt Wolff, in which Kafka published his story "Das Urteil."

The ghetto is a dominant image in Emil Utitz's memoir of Franz Kafka, published in the anthology *Franz Kafka and Prague* that appeared in Prague in 1947.[7] Kafka's fellow student from the *Gymnasium*, Utitz employs the metaphor of diminishing iceberg, "island-like enclosure," a life in "ghetto by free choice" to depict the situation in Prague at the end of the nineteenth century, during their *Gymnasium* years. Binder (2000, 29) points out that some Czech

[7] *Franz Kafka a Praha. Vzpomínky, úvahy, dokumenty*. Praha, Vladimír Žikeš, 1947. (Includes essays by Hugo Siebenschein, Edwin Muir, Emil Utitz, Petr Demetz.)

writers, especially the decadents of the *fin de siècle* (e.g. Jiří Karásek ze Lvovic), also referred to the dreamlike, unreal quality of the city. Similar ideas about Prague German-Jewish society were expressed by Eisner's colleagues from the newspaper *Prager Presse*, Otto Pick (1927) and Willi Haas and already earlier by Oskar Wiener (1919) (Ibid, 25-26), and eventually it became a convenient cliché for authors such as Franz Werfel and Paul Kornfeld in their reflections on Prague of their youth. (Ibid 38) The ghetto image is often conflated with other metaphors – island, mystery, lack of reality, dream world – we should perhaps make an attempt to treat each of them as a distinctive topos.

The ghetto is a powerful metaphor as it resonates with the history of Prague's Jewish population. As a legal entity, the ghetto was abolished in 1781, and its medieval quarter declined, turning into slums during the nineteenth century. The city of Prague decided to raze the neighborhood and build a new, modern city in its place, inspired by Haussmann's urban designs for Paris. The so-called *asanace* (Assanierung) took place in three stages, between 1893 and 1913; only the former ghetto's synagogues and medieval cemetery were spared destruction. Kafka's family was affected by these radical changes: the family moved out of the building where Kafka was born, on the edge of the former ghetto, as it was too close to the planned demolition. A contemporary photograph of one of the subsequent buildings the family moved into in 1907, and where Kafka wrote the "Judgment," provides a striking image of the juxtaposition of the old and the new.[8] The massive, bourgeois building called "U lodi" on the Vltava embankment, built in the ornamental style typical of the turn of the century, stands in the vicinity of the ruins of the small, low buildings of the medieval town. Interestingly, unlike the

[8] Reprinted in Čermák (2008). The book provides good information about places in Prague connected to the life of Kafka and his family, and corrects some prevailing mistakes.

"Čech Bridge" (Čechův most, after the Czech nineteenth-century writer Svatopluk Čech) which was being built during Kafka's residence, and the river embankment, the changes that were happening in the nearest vicinity, the striking yet vanishing ambiance, did not enter Kafka's writing.

Escher[9] describes how the Prague ghetto became a literary topos in the nineteenth century and the early decades of the twentieth. In various popular legends and tales, it was coded as a medieval place with narrow labyrinthine streets, imbued with mystery and magic (e.g. the Golem, the legendary Rabbi Löw, etc.), as a place of the "other" and the "outsiders", which lay not in the province, but in the very middle of a growing city. But the ghetto topos has developed not only in the tales that were gazing towards the past, but it also played an important role in the modern urban Kolportage- und Kriminalliteratur." (Escher 2007, 14) The image of ghetto and the uncanny modern city did not exist alongside, but on top of one another ("übereinander"). (Ibid 22)

The Jewish ghetto became a topos once there was hardly anything left of the Jewish medieval neighborhood: after the ghetto was abolished, the medieval architecture was replaced by modern urban plan and Art Nouveu buildings, and finally the Bohemian Jews were murdered in the Holocaust. Its actual disappearance did not stop the imagination, on the contrary. Quoting Pierre Nora, Escher refers to this paradoxical process: "Der Ort wird paradoxerweise gerade dann zu einem *lieu de mémoire*, zu einem Topos oder Denkbild mit zusätzlichen

[9] Georg Escher, "'But one cannot live without a people.' Paul/Pavel Eisners Kafka-Lektüre und die Literaturwissenschaft." I use the German original of Escher's article published in Czech in the anthology *Paul/Pavel Eisner, Na rozhraní kultur.* Petrbok, V./Kaiserová, K./Dudková, V. (Eds.) 2009.

Sinndimensionen, wenn er die materiellen Qualitäten, die ihn dafür prädestinieren, verliert.“ (Ibid, 11) The former Prague Jewish ghetto, with its current influx of tourists dominating the urban landscape, is indeed a good example of the attribution of symbolic meanings to a place which lost its former purpose and meaning through radical historical changes and disruptions. Escher also points out how the ghetto literary topos started to serve the purpose of explaining non-literary reality, for example in Eisner's concept of triple ghetto applied to the social milieu in which Kafka and other Prague German writers grew up: „Das literarische Bild wird zu seiner eigenen sozialgeschichtlichen Erklärung.“ (Ibid 24) Escher argues that the topos fails to describe historical reality accurately; its understanding of national identity is outdated: „Er unterbricht die Kommunikationsräume entlang sprachlicher Grenzen und bringt gleichzeitig das, was innerhalb dieser Grenzziehungen liegt, auf einen Nenner: ‚Deutsche', ‚Juden' und ‚Tschechen' erscheinen als homogene Kollektive.“ (Ibid 25) The lines between German, Czech and Jewish identities were much more elusive, Eisner's own bilingual identity is a good example.

In 1950, Eisner wrote about the world that had vanished irretrievably. Eisner viewed Kafka as an indirect “witness for a bygone world.”(Eisner 1950, 29-31) Hardly any depictions of this world that has been completely obliterated by Hitler exist. The few exceptions are by other Prague German Jewish writers, but even these writers refused to bear witness. The few existing texts that depict the vanished world are by Auguste Hauschner, Max Brod, and Hermann Grabb. But they too are “no more than good marginal glosses on a nonexistent codex in folio.” (Ibid 30)

Escher pointed out the paradoxes of the nineteenth and twentieth century constructions of the image of the Prague ghetto. Eisner's deployment of the ghetto topos was further removed from these traditional literary constructions. It does not even correspond to the geographical

location of the former ghetto; his authors inhabit the "ghetto" of the German Jewish elite in the New Town (Nové město), the area called Stadtpark (where for example the residence of the wealthy family of Franz Werfel was located), or even more geographically remote, the wealthy residential area of Bubeneč.

Eisner used the figure of ghetto to describe the isolation that in his view was characteristic of the Germanized Jews of Prague, who were no longer constrained by physical or legal restrictions, but by limitations and boundaries that they themselves constructed. Eisner placed the emphasis on the social isolation and seclusion, almost as if blaming the minority for their own destruction.

The Reception and Traces of Eisner's Thesis

Eisner articulated ideas about Kafka and Prague - the "ghetto" topos - that still permeate the topic today.[10] Though he was not the first one to use the ghetto topos, he developed it most extensively. In a recent article, Georg Escher[11] pointed out that Eisner's thesis was used unquestioned as "soziohistorisches Beschreibungsmodell der Lebenswelt" of the Prague German authors from the end of the Second World War to the 1990s. Still, not much is known in the international community of Kafka scholars about the origin of the thesis and its author.

Eisner has not been completely absent from American and West German scholarship; his book-length essay Kafka and Prague was published in English translation in 1950 in New York.

[10] Scott Spector (2000, 198) used another spatial metaphor to emphasize the "abyss between peoples" of Prague. Interestingly, Spector hardly referred to Eisner's work.
[11] Escher 2009, 3.

The concept had a long afterlife in numerous transformations and influenced other writers, including Eduard Goldstücker. However, the scholars whose work on Kafka and Prague German literature seem to reflect in some ways Eisner's theory of "double" or "triple ghetto," often do not refer in their footnotes to Eisner. It could be that the thesis is so widely disseminated that scholars accept it as a received given without considering its origin. It could also be that Deleuze and Guattari's *Kafka, Toward a Minor Literature* (1975) became the *locus classicus* for the triple ghetto thesis and so nobody looks for the archeology of this idea beyond this text. Deleuze and Guattari's book relies on Wagenbach's 1958 monograph on Kafka, an important work of cultural history that placed Kafka in the social and historical context of turn-of-the-century Prague. (Anderson 1989, 7) Wagenbach characterized German Prague in terms similar to those of Eisner; and Eisner was one of his sources.

Deleuze and Guattari's book is a good example for Eisner's influence. The French authors resemble Eisner in rejecting prevalent metaphysical and psychoanalytical categories. They favor what they term realist and social interpretations: "So, should we support realist and social interpretations of Kafka? Certainly, since they are infinitely closer to noninterpretation. And it is much more worthwhile to talk about the problems of minor literature, about the situation of a Jew in Prague, about America, about bureaucracies and about great trials, than to talk about an absent God." (Deleuze & Guattari 1975, 45) Central to their argument is the concept of minor literature, based on their "flagrant but insightful misreading" (Anderson 1989, 11) of Kafka's diary entry for December 25, 1911, in which Kafka reflects on the predicaments of small literatures such as the Czech and Yiddish. Deleuze and Guattari read Kafka as writing about the "Jewish literature of Warsaw and Prague." (Deleuze and Guattari 1986, 16) This

allows them to shift their attention from minor literatures as Kafka conceived of them to the writings of Kafka who himself becomes the embodiment of minor literature, the German Jewish literature of Prague, which the authors view as a subversion of the "major" German literature.[12]

Rather than a literature of a small nation, minor literature is a form of expression, a subversion of a language by a minority use or utilization. The embodiment of the deterritorialized minor literature is Franz Kafka, a German Jew living in Prague and writing in the language that is traditionally called Prague German. They describe the German used in Prague as a deterritorialized language. As such, it is an "artificial language," a language that is "cut off from the masses," a "paper language." (Deleuze and Guattari 1986, 16) This is in a long tradition of writing about Prague German, which the linguist Fritz Mauthner described as "papierenes Deutsch." (Wagenbach 1958) Deleuze and Guattari characterized Prague German as an impoverished language, lacking development and idiom. Wagenbach sketched out the options available to Prague German writers facing such an impoverished language: "The Prague writers' attempts to escape their *linguistic* ghetto remained futile, though diverse: the romantic escape (Hugo Salus, Friedrich Adler, Camill Hoffmann, Ernst Lim); the hasty, intoxicated flight into overblown sexuality (Paul Leppin, Franz Blei, Victor Hadwiger, and occasionally Max Brod and

[12] Vajchr notes that according to the translator of the French original into Czech (published in 2001), Deleuze and Guattari based their interpretation on translations of Kafka to French that often "turn around the meaning of the original." (Vajchr 2001, 21) No matter whether the "misreading" is that of Deleuze and Guattari, or whether their interpretation was based on a faulty translation, it is striking that Deleuze and Guattari were content working with translations of primary texts when their main claim concerns Kafka's language. This is not the place to discuss all their misconceptions and misunderstanding of the Prague linguistic environment, but I will point out just the few most important ones: Contrary to their claim, Yiddish was not an option for the Prague writers of Kafka's generation, since the assimilated Jews hardly knew any. Their command of Czech was – at least for writers such as Kafka and Rilke – too rudimentary for it to be the language of their writing. Despite his insecurities, German was the only literary language available to Kafka.

Franz Werfel); the desire for an iridescent dreamworld (Leo Perutz, Gustav Meyrink)…" (Wagenbach 1989, 51) Kafka, however, opted for a diametrically opposed solution, that of poverty and sobriety. Deleuze and Guattari sum up Wagenbach: "(a)ll these marks of the poverty of a language show up in Kafka but have been taken over by a creative utilization for the purposes of a new sobriety, a new expressivity, a new flexibility, a new intensity." (Deleuze and Guattari 1986, 23) Kafka's language markedly differs from that of his fellow Prague writers.

This brief overview of the French theorists' main theses shows the similarity between their ideas and those of Paul Eisner: the emphasis on the desire to belong to a community (Eisner repeatedly refers to Flaubert's remark about a group of a mother surrounded by her children, "Ils sont dans le vrai," and emphasizes Kafka's admiration for the French author and the great value he placed on founding a family), emphasis on Kafka's alleged social consciousness (Eisner writes about Kafka's hybridization: "the hybridization in every respect, the marginal position on all banks and coasts" – due to this "social conscience" [Eisner, 1950, 71]), the characterization of Prague German as a language cut off from the masses; the juxtaposition of Kafka's style and that of other Prague German writers, whom the French authors misleadingly call the "Prague school," the neo-romantics and expressionists, such as Meyrink. (Eisner 1957, 116) Eisner's ideas enter their work indirectly through Wagenbach, who refers to Eisner's 1950 book *Kafka and Prague*, and describes the "Ghetto der Juden – von den Tschechen als 'Deutsche' gemieden, von den Deutschen als Juden zurückgewiesen." (Wagenbach 1958, 77)

Eisner's main critic Hartmut Binder pointed out how the ghetto topos shaped subsequent understandings of the Prague German Jewish milieu either from Eisner directly or indirectly or from Oskar Wiener who wrote about similar ideas as Eisner at the same time as Eisner. Authors

such as Claudio Magris (1980), A. M. Rippellino (1973), and Jürgen Born (1991) took it at face value to describe German Prague as being removed from reality and from other German speakers, as a mysterious, ghostly, island. (Binder 2000, 44-46) Some authors used very similar ideas to that of Eisner, but received them through secondary sources.

Criticism of Eisner's Thesis

In recent years, several critics pointed out the weaknesses of Eisner's theory of triple ghetto, most systematically Hartmut Binder. Binder confronted Eisner's thesis with extensive historical material in order to refute its validity. He approached the subject systematically, carefully documenting the relationships between Germans and Jews, Jews and Czechs, and Czechs and Germans, both in public and private life, and before and after the foundation of Czechoslovakia in 1918. The Prague Jews identified with Germans (Jews formed a large portion of the German minority), and since the Germans viewed Czechs as inferior, had no reason to feel excluded. As for the relationship between Czechs and Germans, Binder emphasized the contacts rather than strife and isolation, especially in private life (the divide was felt more in the public sphere). There were lively contacts among German and Czech artists and writers. Similarly, Max Brod in his 1967 book *Der Prager Kreis* described the active interest of the German authors in Czech culture, but noted that Germans were admonished for such interest.[13]

[13] See Binder's 2000 section on the Germans and the Czechs (Deutsche und Tschechen). 85-137.

Binder further argues that rather than describe the final years of Austria-Hungary, Eisner's concept may apply to the situation after 1918, when the situation of German minority changed significantly.

> Er bringt nicht die Verhältnisse in der ausgehenden Habsburger-Monarchie zum Ausdruck, sondern die Ängste der politisch und kulturell immer stärker isolierten Prager deutschen Gesellschaft der zwanziger und dreißiger Jahre, die zumindest teilweise eine Folge ihrer liberalen Ideologie war und es jetzt für ihre nationalistische und antisemitische Umwelt unmöglich machte, sie kulturell und gesellschaftlich zu integrieren. (Binder 2000, 81)

Binder suggests that Eisner's personal situation is reflected in his ghetto concept. He shows, for instance, how Eisner projected the conditions in his own school (overwhelmingly Czech, with an insignificant Jewish minority) on Kafka's German school, where Jews formed the majority. Similar projection is apparent in the claim that Prague Jewish writers did not participate either in Czech or German life. Binder concludes that Eisner's writing reflects his own split between the Czech and German cultural circles.

> Ersetzt man die Behauptung durch die inhaltlich verwandte Formulierung, diese Autoren schwankten orientierungslos zwischen diesen beiden Volksgruppen hin und her, ergibt sich eine Selbstcharakterisierung Eisners, der gerade in den Jahren, in denen er seine Thesen über die Prager deutsche Literatur entwickelte, zwischen dem deutschen und dem tschechischen Kulturkreis hin und her gerissen wurde, ohne sich in einem der beiden wohlfühlen zu können. (Binder 2000, 80-81)

Eisner's situation was very specific.

While presenting the results of impressively extensive historical research, Binder did not explain the appeal, power and tenacity of Eisner's thesis. This might not have been Binder's goal, but it is what makes Eisner's thesis interesting still today.

Escher (2009) offers a valuable reading of Eisner's rhetoric. He places Eisner's arguments within the contemporary discourse, and briefly points out the attractiveness of the concept for post war *Germanistik*, both in the East and in the West. (Ibid, 5) Eisner's rhetoric (the use of concepts such as Scholle/hrouda, Blut/krev, Volk/lid, Stamm/kmen, and Rasse/rasa) was influenced by the literary/critical discourse that developed in Bohemia around 1910, and whose proponents were August Sauer and Josef Nadler,[14] among others. This discourse, in which literary work was understood as the result of the author's belonging to a particular "(Volks-) Kollektiv" was widespread after the first war. On the Czech side for example, it was represented by literary critics F.X. Šalda and Arne Novák. Escher uses Nadler as a prototype of this sort of thinking to point out how in Eisner's writing Kafka is a product of "Prag als Ghetto." This figure of Prague as ghetto is determined by "Lebensraum" and by biologically/ethnically conceived notion of the "collective." In that sense, Prague is present in Kafka's work in a "totally unfigurative" way (ganz unmetaphorisch). (Escher 2009, 6) It is not a stage, but rather the metaphysical *genius loci* that fully penetrates Kafka's writings; they are the product of their environment. This however seems contradictory: on the one hand, Prague is considered in a figurative way as "Figur von Prag als Ghetto," on the other hand its figurative sense is denied when it comes to its significance for Kafka's prose, a contradiction that Escher does not elaborate.

Eisner's thesis also shares with the contemporary Nadlerian discourse its anti-individualistic rhetoric (an individual is determined by higher entity such as Stamm, Volk), (Ibid, 7) which has its parallels also in contemporary Zionist discourse. Also the concept of symbiosis,

[14] August Sauer, (1855-1926), a Professor at Prague German University; Josef Nadler (1884-1963), was a student of August Sauer and the author of *Literaturgeschichte der deutschen Stämme und Landschaften*. Regensburg 1912.

so important to Eisner, has its roots in Nadler who who viewed symbiosis as a positive term, unlike assimilation, which he conceived of in the traditional anti-Semitic sense, as "Verstellung" and "Mimikry." Escher points out that Eisner did not oppose symbiosis to assimilation as Nadler did. For Eisner, the two terms overlap; he does not differentiate between the two; symbiosis for him describes Czech-German coexistence as much as Jewish-German and Jewish-Czech assimilation. (Ibid, 8) Importantly, Escher points out the ambiguity and vagueness of Eisner's categories, the lack of clarity of Eisner's signifiers. It is easy to detect Eisner's argumentative imprecision in his journalistic writings. Eisner was using the following terms to allude to the ghetto-situation of Prague German Jews: "Stammsghetto," "soziales Ghetto," "Ghetto der Künstlerseele" (1933); "zerebrales Ghetto" (1938-9); "racial, religious ghetto." (Ibid, 4) Similarly, the term *lid* (people) can refer to several different categories that go beyond Nadler's biological sense, and allow for biographical and socio-historical dimensions (such as processes of emancipation and secularization of Jews in Bohemia). Inclusion of these other realms (biographical, socio-historical) lifts Eisner's concept beyond the contemporary discourse; it is this openness that made it attractive or useful for various postwar scholarly positions. The socio-historical perspectives presented by Eisner provided valuable source to those Kafka scholars who opposed existentialist interpretations.

Eisner's thesis lent itself also to Marxist readings of Kafka and Prague German literature in the 1960s, especially in its anti-individualistic rhetoric, the call for rootedness in *Volk* that can be re- and misinterpreted as the working class, and the attempt to explain literature from its socio-historical context. Escher mentions in this respect articles by Eduard Goldstücker who for example referred to Eisner in his paper at the Liblice Conference and transposed Eisner's

isolation from *Volk* into Marxist class categories, and for whom the German Jewish bourgeoisie represented a social class in decline. The "prophetic" perception of this decline gave Kafka and his contemporaries their aesthetic value. (Ibid, 11) Deleuze and Guattari, similarly to Goldstücker, see Kafka's environment as generating his work: his "deterritorialized" language emerged as a response to the specific circumstances described by Eisner. Escher draws our attention to unexpected, curious similarities between Eisner, Marxist critics of the 1950s and 1960s, and the 1920s right-wing, nationalistic *Germanistik*.

> Deren Gemeinsamkeiten allein sind schon erstaunlich genug; dass sie sich ausgerechnet in Eisners Beschäftigung mit Kafka manifestieren, noch viel mehr.Wo sich die Anknüpfungspunkte insbesondere für die marxistische Nachkriegsliteraturwissenschaft finden, ist zwar unschwer zu erkennen; bemerkenswert bleibt dabei jedoch, wie mühelos die Rhetorik der Zwanziger- und Dreißigerjahre, die sich bei Eisner so stark manifestiert, übernommen werden kann, obwohl sich ihre ideologischen Konnotationen dabei radikal ändern mussten." (Ibid, 12)

In his concluding remarks, Escher considered to what extent Eisner's rhetoric was intentional or "strategic": was his argument striving for a particular effect? Did he try to make Kafka acceptable for Czechs, for Czech Jews, and later for the Marxists? Escher points out that Eisner rejected the idea that Kafka's sympathies towards the Czech nation and culture could be a way out of "self-inflicted isolation". This isolation cannot be relieved simply by accepting Czech identity. (Ibid) This, of course, is a reflection of Eisner's struggles with his own identities.

The importance of Eisner's writing, I believe, is not diminished by this criticism. As Kafka's contemporary, Eisner was one of the few direct witnesses of the milieu in which Kafka and other Prague German writers lived and wrote; this by itself gives his insights a special

credibility. Eisner survived the Nazi occupation in Prague, and unlike many other German Jewish authors who left the city before the war or perished during the Holocaust, he continued to live there until his death in 1958, carrying with him through the dramatic political changes brought by Nazism and Communism his intimate knowledge of Kafka's Prague that no longer existed.

It is important to attempt to understand Eisner's striking rhetoric, rather than reading him merely as a source of historical evidence: the highly emotional tone, the inner contradictions, and the vague yet powerful quality of his terms. Exposing argumentative contradictions and impreciseness may be correct, but not interesting or insightful. A more fruitful approach to Eisner's writings may be to consider them an expression of Eisner's own perceptiveness and flexibility. Eisner's thesis may reflect his own situation more than the conditions of his community (as Binder argued); however it does not diminish the impact it had on subsequent writers. Several factors, I believe, contributed to the persuasiveness of Eisner's thesis: his unmediated experience and a status of witness appealed to foreign readers. The ghetto concept was sufficiently vague and greatly suggestive, therefore easily applicable to diverse historical and literary material. After the disappearance not only of the physical ghetto at the turn of the century, but of most of its inhabitants and their descendants, it became a powerful metaphor, especially for Western readers after the Holocaust. The Czech Marxists avoided references to the religiously laden term "ghetto." They secularized the thesis, but, as I will show later, they also applied Eisner's topos to their reading of Kafka.

The "ghetto" concept still resonates in writings about Prague German writers and their milieu today as if the basic national/ethnic/linguistic delineations, sketched out by Eisner, have

resisted a new terminology. Although rejected by most scholars, Eisner's reading has not yet been replaced by a different reading of Kafka's Prague environment that would have a similar resonance.

Another interesting recent example of strong resonance of the ghetto topos can be found in the work of Spector. Considering the concept of minor literature of Deleuze and Guattari, Spector called the German Jewish inhabitants of Prague a "deterritorialized nonnation." Spector examined the subject of translation and mediation. (Spector 2000, 195-233) He argues that in times when everyone felt the need of belonging to one nation, mediators such as Rudolf Fuchs, Otto Pick and Max Brod, also attempted to carve out a territory for themselves that they could occupy as "national poets." Curiously, he hardly discusses the work of Paul Eisner whom he calls the "brilliant German-Czech 'hermaphrodite,'"[15] nor does he mention him in his chapter on mediators between the German and Czech cultures. Spector's use of the "hermaphrodite" metaphor is peculiar in perpetuating Eisner's own gendered metaphors. Eisner's discussion of the relationship between Czech and German identities is highly sexualized (the mutual erotic attraction between Czech women and German [Jewish] males). The Czech woman attracts the German through her exoticism; also the Czech language is highly erotically charged. (Eisner 1992, 16) To use Spector's metaphor, the Czech language is the nymph Salmacis, while Hermaphroditus is the German. Eisner's "body" combines both the Czech and German elements, but in no way do they coexist in harmony, as befits the ancient myth. Rather, they seem to be in a constant strife. It is Salmacis who assumes the active role in the relationship: she prays to the gods to make them one body. Eisner, living in a majority Czech population, allows the Czech to

[15] Spector (2000, 175) briefly discusses Eisner's ideas about the issues of nationality and eroticism.

embrace him, he wishes to yield to the Czech element – at least to some extent, without ever giving up on his German mother tongue. Eisner's position would likely be controversial, as suggests the pejorative word *amphibians* (obojživelníci) for Jews speaking German and Czech, used in the nineteenth century, for example by Ján Kollár.[16]

Spector alludes to Eisner's discussion of the erotic relationship between a Czech woman and a German male, but wrongly points out that "the word 'symbiosis' would have been foreign to Czechs and Germans alike"[17] in the context of Czech-German cohabitation. (Spector 2000, 211) Symbiosis was an essential term for Eisner. In his chapter on translators and mediators, Spector mostly considered translation from Czech to German a way of gaining a new territory for Czech cultural figures such as Hašek or Janáček. This is perhaps why he pays so little attention to Eisner, whose main contribution lies in the opposite direction, in translation from German to Czech. Translation from German to Czech cannot be seen exclusively as an attempt to gain a new territory for German culture, simply because of the asymmetry between the "minor" Czech literature and the German culture. It is important to consider the role of translations from German to Czech in the contemporary discourse, as well as from today's perspective.

Eisner: "Two Mother Tongues"

Eisner's bilingualism is crucial to his biography, his understanding of Kafka, and his translation. Therefore, before engaging with Eisner's translation of *The Trial*, it is important to outline a brief overview of his life. Eisner's life and bilingualism help us understand through

[16] In the nineteenth century, the pejorative term 'amphibians' (obojživelníci) was used to describe Jews speaking German and Czech. As Toman writes, the "Czech literary mainstream" in nineteenth century, was "not particularly interested" in incorporation of Jewish authors. (Toman 2009)

[17] The term was widely used by Kafka's contemporaries as well as later, e.g. Felix Weltsch, Gershom Scholem, and Martin Buber.

contextualization his conceptual framework, and to some degree also his translation. The following brief excursion into Eisner's life also aims to consider Eisner's claim of possessing the "intimate knowledge of the circumstances" of Kafka and other Prague German Jewish writers. Was Eisner an "insider" to the Prague German Jewish milieu, or did he maintain a marginal status, and why? No scholarly biography of Eisner exists, and no monograph has been published exclusively about his work (recently, a collection of conference essays came out in Czech and German) (Koeltzsch 2011; Petrbok et al. 2009); the following overview rests on archival documents, scholarly articles and a brief memoir-sketch by his colleague from *Prager Presse* František Kubka.[18]

Eisner (1889-1958) is usually introduced with two versions of his first name, Paul/Pavel. Eisner was born in a Prague German Jewish family, where both Czech and German were spoken.[19] His parents moved from Central Bohemia, a mostly Czech area, to Prague, to look for better economic opportunities, similarly to Hermann Kafka. According to Petrbok, "Eisner's parents were bilingual, as it was common for Jews living in the Czech environment, their mother tongue however was German."[20] The children spoke Czech with their maids. (A situation similar to other Prague German Jewish families, including that of Franz Kafka and even for Jewish families living in the Czech countryside, for example Sigmund Freud spoke Czech with his maid.) Unlike Kafka's, Eisner's education was both in Czech (*Gymnasium*)[21] and German

[18] "Fond Pavel Eisner" in Literární archiv Památníku národního písemnictví, Prague.
[19] Dagmar Eisnerová, „Učiň ji vyvolenou mezi dcerami Slova." Introduction by Eisner's daughter to Eisner (1974). Eisnerová was an exile in Switzerland. I quote from the Czech edition of the book, which reprinted Eisnerová's text as an Afterword. (Eisner 1997).
[20] My translation. Petrbok reprints Eisner's 1946 letter to the Czech critic Václav Černý, in which he describes the lingusitic situation in his family.
[21] *Česká reálka pražská* in Ječná street. After 1850, it was one of the first schools in Austria-Hungary with Czech as the language of instruction. .

(Prague's German University).[22] Petrbok suggests that the choice of Czech school (basic and Gymnasium) was a result of the worsening financial situation of Eisner's father, but his choice of Gymnasium at the time of peaking Czech anti-Semitism also attests to the father's loyalty to the Czech linguistic milieu. (Petrbok 2009, 288-289) Eisner's *Gymnasium* experience was therefore very different from that of Kafka and his circle, among them Max Brod and Hugo Bergmann. In Prague high schools with German language of instruction, the number of Jewish students equaled the number of non-Jews; sometimes the Jewish students formed the majority. Eisner's Czech school was attended by nationalistically-oriented middle and lower classes, and anti-Semitism was present. Binder notes that Eisner was in the position of an outsider. "In dieser Situation mußte es fast zwangsläufig zu Stigmatisierungen kommen, die im deutschsprachigen Prager Schulmilieu nicht vorstellbar gewesen wären."[23]

Eisner's desire to become a musician or conductor was thwarted due to a hearing impediment.[24] Since 1914, he worked in the Bohemian Chamber of Commerce (Böhmische Handels- und Gewerbekammer), until his forced retirement in 1939, as the head of the translation department. Concurrently, since 1914, he studied Slavic, German and Romance Languages at the German Karl-Ferdinands-Universität in Prague. In 1919, Eisner married a Czech-German woman (Deutschböhmin) Margaretha Wagner from the north Bohemian town of Reichenberg (Liberec).[25] In the same year, he converted to Protestantism. He was a prolific writer, translator,

[22] This short biographical portrait of Eisner rests on articles by Kurt Krolop (2007) and Hartmut Binder (2000), as well as biographical material contained in Eisner's collection in Literární archiv Památníku národního písemnictví v Praze (Fond Pavel Eisner).
[23] Binder, 2000, 66.
[24] Krolop (2007) writes about "früh auftretendes schweres Gehörleiden." 8.
[25] Several sources claim that Eisner's wife Margaretha Wagner was a distant relative of Richard Wagner. Even the most recent Eisner anthology contains this claim. (E.g. Daniel Řehák in Petrbok et al. 2009) Petrbok claims that this is a myth. (2009, 276) .

and journalist. He translated from nine languages to Czech (German, French, Spanish, Italian, English, Russian, Serbo-Croatian, Hungarian, and Icelandic), from Czech to German, and authored many essays, anthologies, and newspaper articles.

In addition to his day job, Eisner was a writer and external editor of the *Prager Presse*, a German newspaper founded after Czechoslovakia's independence in 1918. His former colleague from the *Prager Presse*, František Kubka (1894-1969) describes how Eisner divided his days among his job, journalism, and translation, which he practiced in the night. (Kubka 1959, 108)[26] In his short but insightful sketch, Kubka offers glimpses into Eisner's everyday life and his personality. It is also a first hand testimony to Eisner's hearing and visual disabilities, which are relevant in the context of Eisner's bilingualism and translation work: „P.E.'s brain was curiously organized. The external world entered into this brain through the gate of imperfect senses. Already in his youth P.E. was shortsighted and almost deaf. He was hiding it from others as well as from himself because he lacked humor. But the shortsighted eyes read incessantly. Books were his world. The deaf heard the sound of their words and he developed his own theories, witty and exalted. He had his notions about verse, prose and music. He went to concerts and in his own way understood Beethoven, Smetana and Janáček. He loved Czech."(Kubka 1959, 108) Kubka offered another testimony to Eisner's hearing impairment. "It was very hard to talk with P.E. he didn't hear you. He only guessed the meaning of your sentences and often he replied to something that you did not say." (Kubka 1959, 109)

Until the late 1920s, Eisner translated Czech poetry into German, edited and contributed to anthologies of Czech literature in German (e.g. an anthology edited by Hugo von

[26] Daniel Řehák alerted me to this source.

Hofmannsthal, „Osterreichische Bibliothek“: „Tschechische Anthologie: Vrchlický, Sova, Březina“, 1917). He also edited anthologies of Slavic folk songs and the 1928 collection „Die Tschechen. Eine Anthologie aus fünf Jahrhunderten,“ dedicated to Hugo von Hofmannsthal. (Krolop 2007, 8-9)

Around 1930, Czech assumed the status of Eisner's primary and dominant language. Krolop suggests that this shift was apparent in a lecture that Eisner held in Prague in Czech in 1929. (Krolop 2007, 9) Eisner criticized the „mutual ignorance“ on both Czech and German sides. He reproached Czechs for their disinterest in German literature from Bohemia, especially the academic *Germanistik*: „Die von Eisner auf tschechischer Seite gerügte ‚kulturelle Germanophobie' galt nach seiner Auffassung vornehmlich für die deutschsprachige Literatur aus den böhmischen Ländern: nicht nur für Rainer Maria Rilke (...) sondern auch für Franz Kafka, vor allem für die mangelnde Kenntnisnahme im Bereich der tschechischen Universitätsgermanistik." (Krolop 2007, 9)

Eisner's shift to Czech reflected a political reaction to the association of the German language with the Nazis. After Hitler came to power, Eisner published critical articles against the Nazi regime under the pseudonym Jan Ort for the Czech daily *Lidové noviny*. Eisner's life during the Nazi occupation of Prague was the subject of two recent studies, neither of which however fully answer all questions regarding his life at that time. (Kryl 2009; Řehák 2009) Eisner remained in the country after the Czech-Jewish writer Viktor Fischl failed to obtain travel documents for him. Viktor Fischl (a writer who later in Israel assumed the Hebraized name Avigdor Dagan and ended up a high official in the Israeli Foreign Ministry) left Prague earlier and obtained in Britain an affidavit for Eisner and his family from H.G. Wells. Due to a mistake

in the British Embassy in Prague, travel documents were issued to a Pavel Eisler, who managed to cross borders instead of Eisner. "The shocked Fischl met the wrong Eisler in England and prayed until the end of the war for Eisner to survive, so that he could share with him all he attempted to do to save him." (Řehák 2009, 137)[27] Eisner's application to be exempted from the anti-Jewish laws from April 1940 survived in the archive (application to "Ehrenariertum"), but in November of the same year he was no longer on the list of those whose case was discussed by the government committees (the list was continuously reduced at the pressure of the Reichsprotektor's office.) Documents that would shed more light on how Eisner's family avoided deportation after the fall of 1944 are missing. Before that date, he was protected by his being married to a non-Jewish woman. (Kryl 2009, 135)

Eisner's survival in Prague is only partially documented. Eisner's daughter Dagmar Eisnerová writes:

> Pavel Eisner survived. It is too complicated to describe how it was possible. (…) The name of one of the most clean cut anti-fascist journalists was certainly included in the catalogue of the secret police. Not only the police of that era, by the way. But it was mixed up with the personal file of one uninteresting individual of the same name, a bank clerk who left for England. Who mixed it up, we did not know. A miracle. We were receiving the mail of the other person and we had hopes, because it meant that they would not search for the real Pavel Eisner. But later it was necessary to hide. And in the end Pavel Eisner spent several months in the infection department of the Bulovka [hospital, VT] (…) (Eisner 1997, 565)

Eisner was very prolific during the Nazi occupation, both as a translator and as a writer. In his own words (reported by Viktor Fischl in his memoir) Eisner wrote he had produced "seven original works and [produced] twenty five volumes of translation of world poetry." (Řehák 2009,

[27] Řehák quotes an article by Fischl, a memory of Dana Emingerová, and Eisner's own article from 1946.

139) He wrote several books about the Czech language. According to his letter to Max Brod, he also translated then Kafka's *Trial*. (I will return to this letter later.)

Eisner's life in the 1950s is not well documented either. As Eisnerová indicates, his activities were curtailed, but it is unknown how interesting he was for the new Communist authorities and their Secret Police. Eisner's name "practically vanished from the public consciousness after the war," writes Žídková, in reference to the reception of Eisner's books about the Czech language (Žídková 2009, 231).[28] His daughter wrote about Eisner's limited opportunities in the 1950s. Eisner resorted to giving private Czech lessons, as he did as a young man, but was also "allowed to translate." (Eisner 1997) I discuss the political circumstances after 1948, the political show trials and the official anti-Semitism, in the chapter on Eduard Goldstücker. Although Eisner was not politically active, we still have to consider his intellectual activities against the political background of the 1950s. As a German Jewish author (who converted in 1919), he would be viewed with suspicion by the Communists in power. We should however note that after 1948, Eisner's Kafka study appeared in the journal *Světová literatura* (*World Literature*) in 1957, and his translation of *The Trial* was published in 1958.

While some of Eisner's earlier activities were examined by scholars, what he did during the 1950s remains obscure. The decade was precarious for him. He alluded to his own situation in a letter to *Československý spisovatel* publishing house, which was preparing his translation of *The Trial*. Eisner took issue with the fact that the young Marxist philosopher Ivan Dubský[29], who authored a 1957 article about Kafka, was asked to write the Introduction for the book. The initial

[28] Žídková discusses the reception of Eisner's popularizing linguistic works and asserts that Eisner's writings about the Czech language were hardly mentioned under Communism. Interest in Eisner, a "rediscovery" of his works started in the mid 1990s, after the 1992 publication of an anthology of Eisner's works about the Czech language.
[29] I asked Ivan Dubský about this incident, but he did not remember any of that.

omission (whether it was by accident or intentional) of Eisner as an author for the introduction, provoked him to write about the "massively consistent attitude towards me."[30] This elliptic allusion can only refer to the perceived official position towards Eisner. In his letter to an editor of *Československý spisovatel*, mentioned earlier, Eisner sums up his work on Kafka during the preceding forty years, adding: "The fact that this is not known at your place is a parcel of the massively consistent attitude towards me. (…) But I am no longer surprised by anything." Eisner then ends the letter: "After twenty years of quarantine Kafka will be printed again in Prague. One would expect that especially in that case he would receive a Prague interpretation. I was the first one who interpreted him so fully. Abroad it is known, and at Fischer they would be probably amazed that someone else, not me, introduces Kafka. I don't care, nothing surprises me anymore."[31] Eisner receives an apologetic reply inviting him to write the Afterword, which he eventually did.

In contemporary scholarship, Eisner is valued mainly as a mediator and translator (Grenzgänger, Vermittler, Übersetzer), along with figures such as Max Brod, Otto Pick and Rudolf Fuchs. (Koeltzsch 2009) The growing interest in these figures formerly considered marginal is manifest in discussions of the role of such mediating figures in the times of "intolerant nationalism."(Koeltzsch 2009; Specter 2000; Kieval 2005) Josef Mühlberger in his *Geschichte der deutschen Literatur in Böhmen 1900–1939*. Mühlberger paid translators and mediators such as Eisner scanty attention. (Mühlberger 1981)[32] In his book on Czech poetry in

[30] Paul Eisner's letter to an editor of *Československý spisovatel*, June 1st, 1957. (Dopis Pavla Eisnera redaktorce nakladatelství Československý spisovatel z 1. června 1957). Literární archiv Památníku národního písemnictví, fond Československý spisovatel. My translation.
[31] Ibid.
[32] Mühlberger is interesting today for its contemporary perspective: Mühlberger devoted more space to the German nationalistic prose writer E. G. Kolbenheyer (1878-1962) than to Kafka.

German translations, Ladislav Nezdařil subsumed Eisner's other literary activities – literary history, writing about the Czech language, his knowledge of Czech oral tradition (Volkslieder), and his own poetry – under Eisner's translations. Without Eisner, explains Nezdařil, authors such as Döblin, Stifter, R. M. Rilke, Heinrich Mann, and most importantly Thomas Mann and Franz Kafka, would not have been accessible to Czechs who do not read German. (Nezdařil 1985, 246) Despite the contemporary growing interest in Eisner, his translations were examined very sporadically. Although critical opinions of them (often dismissive when they relate to Kafka) abound among Czech scholars and intellectuals,[33] just a handful of critical texts were published about Eisner's translations.[34] None of them examines his translations of Franz Kafka and Thomas Mann, two authors who stand out in his translation oeuvre.

Two statements about Eisner persist and reinforce each other: Eisner as bilingual and his "shift" around 1930 from being a German author to become a Czech one, a transition reflected also in the two variations of Eisner's name, Paul and Pavel. (Kubka 1959, Krolop 2007, Nezdařil 1985) "From a German writer he became a Czech writer," noted his *Prager Presse* colleague Kubka. Kučera made the more discerning note that with bilingual individuals, the two languages are never equal. Czech became the dominant language for Eisner around 1930. Eisner's own words on the subject reveal a more complex linguistic identity; the tension between the languages and the ambiguity persisted. In a 1937 article, Eisner describes Prague's multi-lingual predicament from the point of view of a German, who instead of benefiting from the bilingual situation (which Eisner calls the "linguistic symbiosis") lived separated from the Czechs:

[33] E.g. my interviews with the philosopher and Kafka scholar Ivan Dubský and the poet Zbyněk Hejda.
[34] Petr Kučera (2009) examined Eisner's translation of Rilke, Jaromír Povejšil (1992) his translation of *Der Ackermann aus Böhmen*, Ladislav Nezdařil (1985, 244) gave a more general evaluation of Eisner in his book on Czech poetry in German Translations.

> Denn es ist ja so, daß die besinnliche Beherrschung und Verwendung einer fremden Sprache, der tägliche Umgang mit ihr mein Ohr für die Eigentümlichkeiten, Werte, Geheimnisse meiner Muttersprache zu schärfen vermag wie keine andere Sprachschule der Welt, und daß ein gedankenloses Hinleben in einem fremden ‚Sprachraum' mich anfällig machen muß für ein unbewußtes und schleichend-tückisches Beeinflußwerden.(Krolop 2007, 11)

Eisner assumed a position of a Prague German, perceiving the Germans critically for having failed the opportunity of the German-Czech symbiosis.

> Die Sprachsymbiose der Stadt vom Gesichtspunkt der Deutschen: Sie wurde nicht genützt, man lebte auch sprachlich aneinander vorbei... Aber den Gesetzen einer Symbiose entrinnt man nicht; und was ein Segen auch in allem Sprachlichen hätte werden können, wurde ein Fluch.(Ibid)

The refusal to live consciously "symbiotically," to benefit from one another, resulted in *Prager Deutsch* replenished by Austrian, Prague and Bohemian expressions, language affected in its syntax, pronunciation, and lexically so much as to become incomprehensive to a visitor from Germany. At its best, the symbiosis produced two outstanding poets: Rilke and Kafka. "(d)er sprachsymbiotisch belehrte Franz Kafka meißelt seine Gesichte einer metaphysischen Lebensverschuldung und Verstrickung in den Granit einer Prosa, deren deutsche Echtheit gleich neben Stifter zu stehen kommt."(Ibid)

Eisner proposes an interesting model of the mutual influence of languages in a multi-linguistic environment. Despite using the pronoun "mein, mich," Eisner's rhetoric suggests general validity. The active mastering of the "foreign" languages enables a perceptive, acute speaker to better perceive "peculiarities, values, mysteries" of his own mother tongue. For understanding Eisner's languages, it is interesting to note that he possessed the concept of *Muttersprache*, which, at least in this quotation, was clearly German. The Czech language, which was becoming increasingly important to him, remained Eisner's second language.

As we learn from a newspaper article, Eisner lectured on bilingualism in the "Translator Circle" in Prague in 1936. According to the brief report, Eisner proposed the idea of "two mother tongues." Eisner passionately argued for symbiosis between Germans and Czechs. But his own life manifests deep contradictions and attitudes that resist the ideal of symbiosis. According to some scholars, Eisner strove to "belong unambiguously" to one culture, as was typical of the nationalistic times he lived in. For Koeltzsch, Eisner's conversion at the beginning of the 1920s is a sign of such a desire. Eisner embodied the "internal conflict" of the assimilated Jews who wanted to abandon their origins by accepting conditions given to them by the majority non-Jewish population. Eisner's role as a mediator is only comprehensible if we consider this "inner conflict." (Koeltzsch 2009, 11-12) Escher explains how Eisner rejected the attempts at reclaiming Kafka for the Czech cultural tradition, a position represented for example by Hugo Siebenschein.

> Die geradezu metaphysische Züge annehmende Isolation, aus der Kafkas literarisches Werk in Eisners Auffassung erst seine Außergewöhnlichkeit schöpft, kann für Eisner keinesfalls durch eine simple, demonstrative Hinwendung zu einer tschechischen Identität aufgehoben werden.(Escher, 2009, 13)

Rather than moving from one language-based identity to another, from being German into being Czech, Eisner was oscillating between the two, attempting to retain balance, to be both while recognizing that an ideal "symbiosis" was unattainable though desirable. We need to read Eisner's translation of Kafka in terms of his complex attitudes towards the Czech and German languages, culture, nationality, and tradition.

II. Eisner's Translation of *The Trial*

I read Eisner's translation of Kafka as raising and answering several questions: What challenges do translators of Kafka from German into Czech encounter? What are the hallmarks of Kafka's style and what challenges does its translation into Czech pose? How does Kafka translate into Czech, the language he could read as well as write to some extent? How did Eisner render Kafka's style, the style that critics described in contradictory terms, ranging from "precise" and "accurate" to "garrulous" and "uncertain"? (Bullock 1989) How did Eisner's interpretation of Kafka and his fellow Prague German Jewish authors – as living in the conditions of "triple ghetto" - influence his translation? Or conversely, how may have Eisner's reading of Kafka, his understanding of Kafka's language, contributed to Eisner's thesis? How does Kafka's notion of "Treue" correspond to Eisner's choices? And how is Eisner's Czech?

Two translations exist of Kafka's *Trial* to Czech, Eisner's (1958) and Josef Čermák's (1997). These translations to some extent follow what seems to be a more general pattern in translating modernist authors (e.g. translations into English); yet they also operate within their own translation/linguistic tradition and discourse. The recent theory of translation, and the discussion of translations Kafka's works into English, can serve both for comparison and as a foil.

The standards of translations have changed radically since the first Czech translations of Kafka and the first English translations by Edwin and Willa Muir were made in the late 1920s and 1930s. Accuracy and faithfulness have come to supersede elegance and fluency. Translators feel more obliged to adhere to the text of the original, for example to retain Kafka's long and

complex sentences, rather than separating them into shorter ones.[35] Mark Harman, the author of the 1995/6 translation of Kafka's *Castle*, suggests that the style of the original translators of modernist authors "had been formed by nineteenth-century literature" and therefore they "often failed to capture the modernist idiom." (Harman 1996, 292) Harman counts Mann, Musil and Proust, and speaks of an "era for retranslation." "Those of us who set about retranslating the modernists endeavor to render the tone of the original with greater accuracy than that sought or even desired by our predecessors, whose priorities lay elsewhere."(Ibid) The new translations – including those of new Czech translations of Kafka – seek to adhere more closely to the original than the first translations.

Lawrence Venuti likewise offered criticism of translations into English, which traditionally have been striving for "fluency" at the cost of accuracy. "A translated text, whether prose or poetry, fiction or nonfiction, is judged acceptable by most publishers, reviewers and readers when it reads fluently, when the absence of any linguistic or stylistic peculiarities makes it seem transparent, giving the appearance that it reflects the foreign writer's personality or intention or the essential meaning of the foreign text – the appearance, in other words, that the translation is not in fact a translation, but the 'original.' (…) The more fluent the translation, the more invisible the translator, and, presumably, the more visible the writer or meaning of the foreign text." (Venuti 1994, 1) In Venuti's view, the approaches that emphasize fluency are a manifestation of ethnocentrism, because they attempt to "domesticate" the translated literary work, rather than strive to retain its original foreign quality. The text should resist the translator's attempts at domestication. "Fluent translations" are easily readable; they "inscribe foreign texts

[35] This praxis was criticized both in Muirs's translations, and in a translation of Kafka's "Der Heizer" by Dagmar Eisnerová. (Čermák 1990, 24)

with British and American values and provide readers with narcissistic experience of recognizing their own culture in a cultural other." Venuti rejects the "translator's invisibility," "an illusionism fostered by fluent translating." (Ibid, 12-13) A "dissident translator" can deploy various means of "foreignizing intervention." He can choose a text that is marginal in the receiving culture, and translate it by using a "canonical discourse," thus challenging dominant cultural hierarchies, or he can choose a canonical text and translate it using a "marginal discourse" (colloquialisms, archaisms), offering an entirely new interpretation of the canonical work. (Ibid, 267-268)

Czech translations from German entail some specific problems stemming both from the syntactic, grammatical and lexical relationship between the two languages and their historical cohabitation with its cultural and political implications. Venuti's terms such as "fluency," "transparency," "foreignization," and "domestication" are useful in assessing Eisner's translations of Kafka. Is Eisner a fluent translator? Do his choices of archaisms or some other unusual expressions serve a foreignizing effect? In addition to understanding Eisner's translation in terms of contemporary translation theory, I will consider it within the contemporary 1920s Czech discourse on translation. I will show how Eisner's decades-long engagement with questions of "symbiosis", or what we could term also productive cohabitation of German and Czech cultures, his active engagement with his "second" (in the sense of coming later) language, Czech, and his long term interest in Kafka, are reflected in his translation practice.

Eisner appears to have striven for publication of *The Trial* in Czech already at the end of the 1920s. As we learn from his 1928 letter to the Czech *Germanist* Otokar Fischer, he hoped to translate *The Trial* for Sfinx publishing house; but a novel by E.G. Kolbenheyer *Amor Dei* about Spinoza was published instead.(Čermák 1991a) Eisner translated *The Trial* during the war. In his

letter to Max Brod from April 1947, he confessed that he did the translation during the Nazi era, "in his hideout and in fairly inconceivable conditions." (Čermák 1991b) *The Trial*, with Eisner's title *Hrdelní pře*, was to be published after the war as part of Kafka's works in six (or perhaps eight or ten) volumes by the publisher Václav Petr (based on the 1930s edition of Brod and Politzer, published by Schocken and Mercy in Berlin and later in Prague). This edition was initiated by Karel Projsa, the husband of Kafka's niece. Projsa wanted to enlist Eisner as a translator for *The Trial* and use Eisner's translation of the *Castle* (published in 1935), while Projsa would translate Kafka's short pieces. *The Trial* was apparently already typeset, as was the *Castle*, but the entire project collapsed after the 1948 communist coup. (As I discuss later, this edition of the *Castle* was on the list compiled by the post 1948 Ministry of Information and Education of books that needed to undergo a new review process and would never be published.) Čermák described this thwarted publication of Kafka's collected works as a "lost chance": it could have been the first translation of Kafka's oeuvre into any language. (Ibid)

Eisner's significant predecessor as a translator of Kafka was the journalist Milena Jesenská, Kafka's friend and first translator. Discussions of her translations form an important part of their correspondence. In his letter to Jesenská, Kafka commented on what he calls her faithful translation of "Der Heizer" and wondered whether Czech readers will not reproach her for the "Treue", which to him is "das Liebste an der Übersetzung." Jesenská's rendering of "The Stoker" was the first ever translation of Kafka's work into another language. Several other translations by her followed. *Briefe an Milena* elicited numerous scholarly responses. (Anderson 1989; Zilcosky 2003; Specter 2000, 195-233) Some of them discuss Kafka'a and Jesenská's dialogue about her translation of Kafka's writings. Almost nothing was written about Milena's

translation. A rare exception is an article by Čermák, who agrees with Kafka's emphasis in his hesitant query on the literalness of her translation, "ans Extreme grenzende Worttreue."(Čermák 1990, 20) Kafka wrote: "(…) mit welcher Treue Sie es getan haben, Sätzchen auf und ab, einer Treue, deren Möglichkeit und schöne natürliche Berechtigung, mit der Sie sie üben, ich in der tschechischen Sprache nicht vermutet habe. So nahe deutsch und tschechisch? "[36] Čermák added an interesting remark: there may have been a historical reason for Jesenská's translation that "slavishly" retains the German sentence structure that does not sound "natural" in Czech. Čermák suggests that German literature was "much less commonly" translated into Czech than other Slavic literatures because the educated classes of Jesenská's generation read German. Consequently the development of techniques of translating German to Czech was slower. (Čermák 1990, 23) This claim is intriguing, but it appears inaccurate. As the correspondence between Kafka and Jesenská reveals, she herself only learned German when she moved to Vienna with her husband Ernst Pollak. Further, there has been a long tradition of translating from German to Czech. Both "Landessprachen" were used in Bohemia, and their cohabitation engendered similarities, tensions, dependency, and willful attempt at distancing Czech from German. Czech was mostly an exclusively spoken language until the philological project of the Czech National "Revival." During the "Revival" (from the late eighteenth to the middle of the nineteenth century), translation served mostly to assist in the construction of Czech literary and poetic language. The creation of neologisms was part of this tradition. The aim of translation was primarily didactical. Translation of authors such as Goethe and Schiller was for a long time perceived as impossible; Czech lacked the appropriate stylistic means. Veselý points out that

[36] Franz Kafka, *Briefe an Milena.* 1952. 14-15. (Meran, Ende April 1920)

translations were addressed to "simple" readers who did not understand German, and rather than faithful renderings of the original, they produced "rewritings" in Czech based on the German original: they "Czechified" the original texts by changing the names and the setting, and inserting pro-Czech patriotic messages. The project of translation was profoundly political; translations were a subject to censorship that often intervened to eliminate verses that espoused freedom. (Veselý 2002)

Complex contradictory attitudes towards the German language and culture are reflected in the history of translation from German to Czech and seem to be insufficiently reflected in contemporary critical writings (e.g. Čermák's remark above). Czech writings about translations from German betray a curious paradox: on the one hand, there is a repetitive assertion that translations from German to Czech were not perceived as necessary due to the widespread knowledge of German as the language of education in Bohemia; the only purpose of translating from German was to patriotically demonstrate the richness of the Czech language. (Ibid 163) On the other hand, it is a simple fact that most translations to Czech were from German. German even served for a long time as an intermediary language for translating from other European languages such as French or English, since these languages were not spoken by many Czech translators. French and English texts were translated to Czech from their German translation. (Ibid 127) This situation changed by the early twentieth century.

A more thorough discussion of translation from German to Czech would exceed the scope of this chapter. Still, it is important to consider Eisner's contemporary translation discourse. Very little has been written about the translation discourse as it developed in Prague from the end of the nineteenth century to the 1930s. This discourse was very lively and

passionate in critical essays, lectures, newspaper articles, and even polemical poems about the role and mission of a translator. The debate about the role, technique and purpose of translation was intense after the foundation of Czechoslovakia in 1918, when German ceased to be the dominant official language. (Veselý compares the "boom" in translation to the situation after 1989, when, for different reasons, also many books were published that could not be published previously.) (Ibid 163) Scholars of Eisner's generation criticized the late-nineteenth century model of translation that strove for literalness (e.g. the poet Jaroslav Vrchlický and his translation of Faust) and rejected literalness in favor of fidelity. The important *Germanist* and translator of Eisner's generation Otokar Fischer (1883-1938) maintained that translated work must be transposed to the new linguistic environment, rather than create a "slavish," formal imitation. Similarly, Bohumil Mathesius (1888-1952) argued for "transformation," "transplantation," and "transposition" of a literary work to its new environment. An entire tissue with its roots must be transplanted into another organism. (Ibid 165) Fischer had been praised mainly for his "congenial" translation of Goethe's Faust, which around 1930 became an event that occasioned a debate about translation. Eisner reviewed Fischer's translation of Faust in *Prager Presse* and deemed it the first Czech translation of Faust that did not fail. According to Eisner, the Czech language was finally capable of such a translation of Goethe. (Ibid 167) Eisner praised fidelity (věrnost) over literalness (doslovnost); the task of translation was to transpose the main idea of the original work in the language of the translation.

As far as we know, Eisner did not comment in a thorough way on his approach to translation. He wrote about the topic of translation in his "confession"[37] titled "Paradoxes of

[37] The term used by Rudolf Vápeník who wrote an introduction to the anthology.

Translation Craft," which was printed in a booklet on the occasion of the evening of German and Czech students in 1935 at Lese- und Redehalle der deutschen Studenten in Prague. The evening was dedicated to translators. Eisner's translation from Rilke was read there. The short anthology includes also a poem by Otto Pick, "Der Übersetzer", and the response by Otokar Fischer to a poem titled "Překladatel," (The Translator). (Eisner 1935)[38]

In his short text, Eisner wittily alludes to the paradoxes of being a translator and the "entirely dark" translation praxis. Although an "egoistic enterprise," translation nevertheless requires the highest sacrifices, of one's own intellect and one's "soul": "absolute merging, innermost synchronization, passivity of some kind of trance." It is parasitic: "drink from someone else's glass, gurgle and spit it out, and then say: Ecce Shakespeare plus myself." Does the translator create something new? He must retain the "soul," he creates a new body, but not entirely; a body-pastiche, a new robe, new cloths, like a tailor. Is tailoring a craft, or an art? Most likely, the translator is an interpreter, a missionary, but one that transmits his own interpretation. The translator is a producer of a falsified text. "A fraudulent minister plénipotentiaire. Producer of a substitute. A falsifier." (Eisner 1935, 8)

Eisner's short text has a light tone appropriate for a social occasion. It addresses the relationship between the original and the translation, the original author and the translator. He asks hyperbolically: "How can Homunculus be better than Adam?" The translator assumes the position of the demiurge, and corrupts the original creation. The translator is a falsifier; translation is always inferior to the original text. "It is hard to find its raison d'être." Translation

[38] This short anthology about theory and practice of translation includes poems and essays by Otto Pick, Otokar Fischer, and Paul Eisner.

is perhaps "stubborn foolishness, entirely methodical." (Ibid) Eisner describes paradoxes, and each of his claims has its counterpart. How "passive" is Eisner as a translator? He can never "merge absolutely." To use Venuti's terms, Eisner's own translation practice is far away from the "invisibility" stemming from a "fluent" translation. How much of Eisner's own interpretations and ideas enter into his translations of Kafka?

Two drafts of Eisner's translation of *The Trial* are preserved in the Literary Archive in Prague (PNP). While what seems to be the first draft hardly contains any revisions, the second draft contains revisions in longhand, in blue and black ink; the corrected text corresponds to the published text (1958). Eisner's own corrections are mostly lexical changes, which are rare but constitute an important shift in meaning, and changes in verbal constructions. The most significant lexical change is Eisner's decision to change the key word of the novel, "der Process," which he originally translated as "pře" into a cognate, the Czech word "proces." Eisner decided to change this key word apparently when he proofread the translation for the 1958 publication. He commented on this change in his Afterword.[39] Eisner originally called the novel *Hrdelní pře*, an archaic term denoting a trial for murder. He referred to the novel under this title already in the 1920s. Eisner reflects on the decision to change the title into the cognate "Proces" in the Afterword: the word "process" refers to the "complex, strange thing" that "runs," proceeds in the course of the novel.

[39] The title „Proces" resonates with the political show trials in the 1950s (which became popularly known as „proces" with Milada Horáková, Josef Slánský, etc.). I discuss the significance of the novel in 1950s Czechoslovakia in the chapter on Eduard Goldstücker.

> The process proceeds relentlessly/unhaltingly on, it dissolves the entire life of the accused, paralyzes his productivity at work like some mushroom or perenospora – as if it was a pathological 'process' of a deadly disease. (Kafka 1958, 208)[40]

Eisner offers here his interpretation of the novel. Arguably, the main character, Josef K., is not given any life that could be disintegrated. This modern character does not change throughout the course of the novel.

Eisner comments on his translation of the title.

> Taking into consideration the pathological color of the central term 'proces' in Kafka this expression was consequentially maintained in the Czech edition, although without this instance the word 'pře', and 'soudní pře' would at some points sound more natural and better, and in the title perhaps 'hrdelní pře.'(Ibid)

The 1937 Czech dictionary[41] includes both *proces* and *pře* for „trial," today the word "pře" sounds archaic. It derives from the verb „přít se," meaning to argue, to quarrel, and implies an adverserial adjudication of the Common Law type. The word „proces", whose etymology is from the Latin *processus*, implies an action, a continual development, and a temporal dimension: „a progressive forward movement from one point to another on the way to completion."[42] The expression "hrdelní pře," a trial for murder, also implies a death sentence (hrdlo, hrdelní, derives from "throat" and refers to execution). The fact that Eisner proposes this title is curious.[43] The title *Hrdelní pře* would correspond to Josef K.'s execution in the final scene of *The Trial*, but it is of course misleading, because this term, *hrdelní pře*, clearly refers to the crime of murder. Josef K. in Kafka's novel did not commit a murder, and it would certainly be a logical fallacy to draw

[40] Eisner, "'Proces' Franze Kafky," 1958,(his Afterword to the novel.
[41] *Příruční slovník jazyka českého, 1937*. (Díl IV - Vydává třetí třída České akademie věd a umění. V Praze 1941-1943 (Díl IV) 1955-1957 – Státní pedagogické nakl.

[42] Merriam-Webster's Unabridged Dictionary.
[43] Eisner (1957) called his original choice for translating the title, , *Hrdelní pře*, a mistake.

this conclusion from his execution. The term *hrdelní pře* would linguistically correspond to the last sentence of the novel: "Aber an K.s Gurgel legten sich die Hände des einen Herrn", (Kafka 2002b, 312) but only had Eisner translated "Gurgel" by using the corresponding common Czech word "hrdlo." Instead of using this onomatopoeic word, Eisner uses the much more expressive "chřtán."[44] One of Eisner's books about the Czech language may shed some light on this striking choice. In his poetic/etymological dictionary – one of several books he wrote about the Czech language during the war – Eisner writes about the word "hrdlo" as "not nice enough for what it denotes."(Eisner 1996, 102-103) By contrast, and in the same entry, he likes the much more expressive word „chřtán": it is „perfectly expressive", it „evokes brilliantly the narrow cove, or defile in the human body." Yet „hrdlo" would be more logical in the context of the novel since K's executioners are placing their hands on his throat in order to strangle him; „chřtán," usually used for animals, evokes long, narrow space and is most commonly used in the idiomatic expression: „nacpat něco do chřtánu" (to push something in someone's throat), to force-feed and colloquially and strongly expressively, to force something on someone, "down his or her throat.".

It is hardly a coincidence that the important Czech novelist of Eisner's generation Vladislav Vančura (1891-1942), Eisner's friend, published a novel with the title *Hrdelní pře aneb Přísloví* in 1930 (*Trial for Murder or Proverbs*). The novel is distinguished by its experimental language; it uses archaisms and many proverbs. Eisner dedicated his book on Czech language *Chrám i tvrz* (*Cathedral and Fortress*), which he wrote during the Nazi occupation and published in 1946, to Vančura, who, as Eisner notes, „hosted the exiles" at his

[44] The translations of Eisnerová and Čermák use the more accurate and less expressive *hrdlo.*

home near Prague and did not cease to visit Eisner during the war „in the apartment of the Homeless in Vinohrady.... when each visit could cost one's his life." (Eisner 1997, 7) Vančura was executed in Prague in 1942 as a member of the Communist resistance.

Chřtán for throat is not the only unusual expression in Eisner's translation; there are others that do not exist in Czech. Eisner created new expressions, probably involuntarily when German interfered with Czech.[45] Another interesting lexical choice is in the novel's first sentence: "křivé udání," literally „crooked or false denunciation." It is Eisner's rendering of Kafka's "verleumden". The adjective "křivý" or false (literally crooked) exists in connection to „přísaha" (oath) and „svědectví" (testimony). The expression "křivé udání" is Eisner's construct, probably a translation of the German „falsche Anzeige."[46] It does not stand out, as the reader immediately understands its meaning. It is not an accurate translation of Kafka's „verleumden," since the phrase „učinit udání" used by Eisner (to denunciate, to make a statement of denunciation) denotes a bold, deliberate action, an announcement of someone's act to an authority (a very resonant expression in the Czech political and cultural context of the 1950s). Kafka's "verleumden" does not have this institutional reference; it is more ambiguous. Eisner's translations of "Gurgel" as "chřtán," "Prozess" as the originally conceived "pře," emphasize the "Czechness" of Czech and contribute to the "distancing" from German. Occasionally, however, Eisner's German interferes with his Czech; this gives the translation a sense of hastiness, as if Eisner did not sufficiently reflect on his choices.

---

[45] Two other examples: the plural "Ausrufen" is translated as "řečňování," a word that does not exist in Czech dictionaries. ("zu den lauteren Ausrufen des Fabrikanten", 112) Eisner translates "mit Schnee bedeckte Dach" into "na posněženou střechu" (1958,113), using a word that does not exist as a Czech adjective (posněžený). (Eisnerová and Čermák have the standard adjective "zasněženou").

[46] Another expression, "falešné udání," (false denunciation) based on German, exists in Czech.

The examples listed above are emblematic of Eisner's translation of *The Trial.* Eisner makes some bold, deliberate lexical changes that do not correspond to the original. They result from Eisner's intense engagement with Czech language and literature, from his studies of Czech etymology and his interest in modern Czech experimental prose (such as Vančura's). On the other hand, as I will also show later, Eisner's translation is at times very literal and close to Kafka's German in its nominal constructions, in some of his lexical choices, in his preservation of Kafka's long, complex sentences; there are some instances where Eisner's German clearly influenced his Czech. The translation of *Trial* thus reflects Eisner's bilingual predicament and his conscious, active engagement with his two languages on the one hand, but also some unreflected practices.

The famous first sentence of the novel poses specific problems to translators. It uses the narrative form of *erlebte Rede*, which Kafka employs extensively and which is characteristic of modern prose. Unlike traditional nineteenth-century narratives, which clearly distinguish direct speech from the third person, Kafka's novel contains long passages in which the speech of the main character, Josef K., is not presented as his own thought or statement, but as a "fact" (Tatsache) transmitted by the narrator. (I am using the characterization of "erlebte Rede" by Lerch). (Doležel 1993, 23) In modern Czech prose, „erlebte Rede" is identical with the „objective Er-form", and is mostly (but not necessarily) expressed in the past tense. (Ibid 32) This type of narrative technique implies ambiguity in blurring the line between subjectivity and objectivity. The first sentence of the *Trial* is a good example of *erlebte Rede:*

"Jemand mußte Josef K. verleumdet haben, denn ohne daß er etwas Böses getan hätte, wurde er eines Morgens verhaftet."

This sentence engendered a wealth of interpretations and comments by translators, as it establishes a narrative ambiguity that persists throughout the text. The fact of Josef K's arrest contradicts the statement about his innocence. Is the innocence a subjective perception of K – someone must have been telling lies about him – and will he be cleared off in the course of the novel? Or would his transgression be confirmed, and thus his arrest will make sense? The last clause is the least ambiguous; it is a straightforward announcement that clashes with the preceding two clauses that let the reader consider whether what he reads happened only in K's mind. Eisner translated the sentence as follows:

„Patrně učinil někdo na Josefa K. křivé udání, neboť aniž se dopustil něčeho zlého, byl jednou ráno zatčen."

Ursula Marie Mandel summarizes the problems the sentence poses to translators into English. The story is told from the limited omniscient point of view of the narrator who tells the story from the perspective of a single character. (Mandel 1990, 51) The uncertainty is apparent from the first clause of the sentence, "Jemand mußte Josef K. verleumdet haben"; in Muirs' translation, "someone must have been telling lies about Joseph K." It is the second clause that poses problems to the translator. Kafka uses the past subjunctive mood "denn ohne daß er etwas Böses getan hätte." Kafka had a choice of several verbal constructions. He could have used the infinitive form "ohne etwas Böses getan zu haben," which expresses perfectivity, a completed action. Instead, Kafka used the subjunctive mood that creates "semantic dichotomy or ambiguity: it is unclear if reference has been made to *actions* not executed by Joseph K. or to Joseph K.'s habits [Gewohnheiten] and, by implication, his sensibilities."(Ibid) The quality of habitual performance, disposition and perpetuity is missing in Muirs' translation, which clearly states that

Joseph K. did not do anything wrong, it refers to specific actions. Kafka's original clause contains an ambiguity that causes two possible readings: it can be understood as a statement of Joseph K.'s completed action (or rather the lack of a transgressive action) or as his inclination to do "something wrong."

The Czech language offers fewer possible verbal structures than German. The conjunction "aniž", which corresponds to the German "ohne daß," can be followed either by present or past indicative or by subjunctive. Semantically, there is no difference between the uses of the indicative or subjunctive mood after "aniž" (Ševčíková 2009); the conjunction by itself introduces a hypothetical, unreal statement. Eisner's translation, similarly to the English one, translates this clause with a perfective verb form, indicating a completed action. The habitual quality is missing in the Czech translation too. Whether the translation uses conditional or indicative mood (both would be correct, but historically the indicative was considered the correct usage, which explains Eisner's choice), it denotes a completed action, and implies certainty.

Czech translators have several options to choose from to render this clause. The Czech language possesses perfective and imperfective verb forms, which denote completed and incomplete actions respectively. The translator may choose the imperfective form of the verb dělat (to do) and the translation could then read "aniž dělal" or "aniž dělával něco zlého" Either of these verbs would indicate incompleteness, perpetuity, repetitiveness, habitual behavior. Neither would however sound "natural" in Czech, and this is why Eisner and Čermák chose a perfective verb form. Both Eisner and Čermák made very particular and specific choices of verb when translating Kafka's „getan hätte." Eisner used the verb „dopustil se," which implies „something wrong." But the same verb, dopustit (unreflexive), also implies passivity, „to allow

something to happen“ and thus the overall sense of K's transgression is not very definite and persuasive. Čermák's „provést“ corresponds to English „commit“ and even more strongly implies „something wrong“. But there is also something about this word that subverts its seriousness, since it is often being used in mock-serious tone, for example it is often used emphatically and regularly applied to children's misdeeds. In a way the verb substitutes semantically for the German „Böses", which has both serious theological connotations, but also has a fairy-tale ring to it. Both Czech verbs are not neutral as Kafka's „tun," they imply wrongdoing, but this wrongdoing is somewhat subverted in both cases. The Czech translator could theoretically use the neutral verb „dělat“ (udělal něco zlého), which would be more general, unspecific, open to interpretation – it would imply various degrees of transgression, in ethical rather than in legal terms. The difference is apparent – the verb „dělat“ would sound clumsily and less elegant, less idiomatic.

The Czech (as well as English) translation refers to a complete action[47], not preserving the ambiguity of Kafka's second clause. The Czech reader is told that Josef K. did not do anything wrong; and some kind of consistency is achieved by the claim that "apparently someone has falsely denunciated," as a translation of Eisner's sentence would have it. This clause reveals the subjective perception of K. The ambiguity – subjective perception and objective statement of K's arrest - is maintained in the Czech translation. The German sentence allows the interpretation of K's transgression as a habitual behavior; it stems from his innate qualities, it is a permanent trait. This bears consequences for K's status of guilt. In the Czech sentence, one-time action and the lack thereof is stated. But it still does not preclude a habitual

[47] Even more so in Čermák translation: he uses the conjunction „ač“.

wrongdoing; the use of perfective form does not preclude any other wrongdoing in the past. The way Eisner used perfective participle is revealed in the next sentence of the novel: "Kuchařka paní Grubachové, jeho bytné, která mu každý den ráno kolem osmé *přinesla* snídani, tentokrát nepřišla." (Italics are mine) The form "přinesla" is perfective, and refers to a completed action. This seems to clash with the indication of repetition, "každý den." (For the 1965 second edition of the novel, Eisner's daughter revised the verb into the perfective „přinášela," which clearly refers to a repetitive action.) But Eisner's translastion is not wrong, because it can indicate a completed action that can happen every day, and so also his choice of a perfective participle in the first sentence does not preclude a transgressive behavior any other day in the past. This corresponds to Eisner's own quasi-moral and quasi-religious interpretation of the character. He deems K. guilty: "The fact that K. is indeed guilty, whether objectively and absolutely, whether in the eyes of the court, is proved by his demise." His transgression and guilt lies in his personal failures: "He is a decent man, but cussed in himself. He does not harm anyone by purpose, the less he lives for somebody and for something, the less he sacrifices himself (…) He is a *lukewarm* man, of whom it was written for a thousand years how he will be dealt with. The guilt of such men, which they are not aware of, cannot be absolved." (Kafka 1958, 2111, 213)

The trial "runs unhaltingly/relentlessly on," describes Eisner what happens in the novel. This assertion resembles what Beckett wrote about Kafka's style and what Mark Harman paraphrases as "something relentless about the forward momentum of passages (…) in which Kafka blends external narrative and indirect internal monologue."(Harman 1996, 306) Eisner was able to maintain this relentless quality of Kafka's writing. Unlike some other early translators, he only rarely changed Kafka's punctuation, mostly maintaining Kafka's long

sentences and adhering to Brod's edition. Eisner maintains the density, the difficulty, and Kafka's "forward momentum," but only if we add that this forwardness is often halted by obstacles. I would go as far as contradict Beckett's reading by claiming that the pace is far too static to suggest a movement. This narrative quality of the novel contradicts Eisner's interpretation of the "trial that runs 'unhaltingly,' incessantly on." Or rather: it runs, but nothing happens that would have consequences for K.'s life.

Several critical analyses of Eisner's translations exist, about his translation of Rilke, translations of Czech poetry into German, and his translation of *Der Ackermann aus Böhmen* into Czech. Interestingly, Eisner's translations of prose have not been subjected to critical analysis, although he is credited as the translator who introduced Thomas Mann and Kafka to Czech readers. Povejšil wrote about Eisner's translations of *Der Ackermann aus Böhmen* and the Czech Romanticist poet Karel Hynek Mácha's poems in German – and set them against Eisner's translations of Thomas Mann (which he however does not analyze). Povejšil merely asserts that in his translations of Mann, Eisner's original and creative language interfered and overshadowed the original. In the two translations that Povejšil praises, Eisner was able to "abandon his own language": for his translation of Mácha's German poems he used the language of Mácha's Czech poems," and in translating *Der Ackermann*, he used the seventeenth-century language of Comenius.[48]

[48] Eisner's translations of Czech poetry into German have been criticized for their overly expressive tone and neologisms, deemed no longer justified in Eisner's times. Kučera (2009) criticized Eisner's penchant for creating neologisms in his 1930 translation of Rilke's *Duineser Elegien*. A result of his keen linguistic observations, it serves him well in some of his writing on Czech, but can do harm in his translations. Kučera praises Eisner's

Eisner is not overly experimental in his translation of Kafka's prose. The style is spontaneous, almost rushed. He does not seem to be too conscious in choosing his words; on the contrary, some of his expressions are clearly influenced by German (e.g. "křivé udání," false accusation). Interesting in that respect is his translation of Kafka's peculiar phrase "mit zwanzig Händen in die Welt hineinfahren," which Eisner translated literally as "dvacaterou rukou vjíždět do života," while Čermák chose to translate it freely, by the common Czech idiom "střemhlav vrhat do světa," which means something like "throwing oneself into things without much deliberation," and does not capture the strangeness and ambiguity of Kafka's phrase, let alone the idiosyncratic multiplicity of Kafka's metaphor.

Eisner's language is often very close to Kafka's German, in syntax as well as word choice, a quality that constitutes obstacles to "fluent" reading of Kafka's prose, to use Venuti's term. Another good example of Eisner's approach is his preservation of nominal constructions, which are often translated by verbal constructions to Czech – a shift that translators make for the text to sound more natural. Čermák writes that this practice is not suitable in Kafka's case: "Gerade bei Kafka ist dieser Vorgang der Verbalisierung des deutschen Satzes oft nicht gut möglich, wenn seine Sprache und sein Stil die typische Wortkargheit, Geschlossenheit und die Suggestivität nicht einbüßen sollen, die sich der literarische Inhalt seiner Werke erzwingt." (Čermák, 1990, 21) Čermák's translation is often more accurate than Eisner's, yet he does not

---

"pioneering" translation of Rilke, but also criticizes Eisner's "exalted expression" that does not correspond to Rilke's modern voice. Ladislav Nezdařil, (1985) in his book about Czech translations of German poetry, characterized Eisner's approach as "pioneering, reflective, educated, but not always mastered linguistic expressionism." Eisner's approach was influenced by Otokar Fischer, but lacked, according to Nezdařil, "Fischer's deeper poetic substance." Nezdařil points out Eisner's "overexposed expressionist style", "translation intellectualism," and "linguistic originality." Eisner's translations are at their best when Eisner is "natural" and "simple." Nezdařil thus sums up, in writing, the criticism that accompanied Eisner's translations of German Modernists, albeit mostly in popular, oral reception.

give up on Kafka's text sounding Czech. The difference between him and Eisner can be exemplified by the following translation of Kafka's nominal construction from the first chapter:

„stillschweigend durch Aufmerksamkeit und Überlegung festzustellen"

Eisner: "aby pozorností a uvažováním zjistil"

Čermák: "tím, že ho mlčky pozoroval a přemýšlel"

Eisner's translation maintains Kafka's nominal construction (literally in English: „in order to find out through attention and consideration"), while Čermák introduces a dependent clause. Eisner's phrase is comprehensible, but clumsy. It is yet another example how German influenced his Czech.

The examples above show Eisner's "Treue" that borders on being "sklavisch," to use Čermák's evaluation of Jesenská's translation. By contrast, Eisner made several bold choices that correspond to Eisner's reflection on the Czech language (the original choice of *pře* for Proceß, *chřtán* for Gurgel) and have a "foreignizing" effect. These choices are far more expressive than the original (another example: "jímal ho hnus" for "er ekelte sich"). These interventions in Kafka's prose have a "foreignizing" effect, in that they clearly depart from the overall calm and "civil" tone of the prose, and alert the reader to the different linguistic realm, different etymology, and possibly different readings of Kafka's prose. But paradoxically these choices could also present Venuti's "domestication." They may be grounded in the current translation discourse, specifically the idea or "transposition" and "substitution" of a text to a different, Czech realm: Eisner sought to make Kafka's prose "more Czech or Slavic" by fleshing out some words – rather than using Czech words with German etymology, he chose words that would

distance Czech from German. His choice as translator was anchored in his thinking about the Czech language (e.g. his etymological considerations about *pře* and *chřtán*).

Eisner wrote extensively, for over three decades, about Kafka. He did not pay much attention to Kafka's language. His comments are mostly limited to interpretations of characters' behavior rather than the tone, the flow, the word choice, and the style. One important exception is in an article from 1957, in which he writes the following about Kafka's language: "Language, diction: a perfect quality, "dry air" without any fog, high density, conspicuously low frequency of adjectives, absence of mood-generating elements, great art of sentence rhythm, of cadence, masculine diction, original without striving. (…) Almost no neologisms, not even where it is so easy for a German author, in the infinite realm of the composites. (…) It is the more striking since around Kafka - and also in Prague – belletristic texts were emerging in neo-romanticist and expressionistic vein, full of language experimentation and novelties, texts linguistically flattering, moved by hectic shivers. Kafka is the opposite of that all – he is calm and discipline." (Eisner 1957, 116)[49]

Eisner's translation of *The Trial* is more intuitive than Eisner's thoughts from 1957. Eisner's German got carried over to his Czech; the influence of German syntax does not seem to be a deliberate decision, but rather an unconscious interference. More intentional are Eisner's unusual choices of expressive words, which are not supported by the original.

Venuti calls for a conscious intervention of the translator, which, however, can contradict the requirement of accuracy. Eisner was certainly not an "invisible" translator; his translation

[49] „Texty jazykově plápolavé, rozhýbané hektickou zimničností."

was not "transparent," to use Venuti's terms. But these terms must be more accurate to be useful: what kind of intervention is valuable? How is the requirement of accuracy (that by itself may generate foreignizing effect) reconcilable with that of "foreignization" that stems from translators' bold choices based on their "significantly different interpretations of the foreign text"? (Venuti 1994, 268) Eisner had been criticized for translating Thomas Mann in a way that resulted in the novels "being by Eisner, rather than Thomas Mann." His creativity, to the critics, interfered with the original text. (Povejšil 1992, 14) Similar objections could be raised about his translation of *The Trial*, although these instances are not numerous and constitute an exception rather than the rule.

Eisner's thinking about Czech-German Prague, the ghetto topos and the idea of symbiosis between Czechs and Germans, was written onto his translation. Eisner's requirement of mutual perceptiveness, conscious sensibility towards the language of the other, found its expression in Eisner's translation. His conscious attempt at bringing the reader's attention to the Czech language, are however at odds with the more "fluent", spontaneous and less reflective parts of his translation.

The figure of visibility is peculiarly fitting to describe Eisner's situation if we consider that he was translating *Trial* and writing books about Czech language while in hiding, while making himself literally invisible, during the Nazi occupation. The metaphor of visibility can be extended further as we can understand Eisner's "feverish" pace of his translating and writing, and the massive amount of work he created during the war, as attempting to make visible the sort of culture that was suppressed by the Nazi regime. He engaged in a cultural mission, in a willful attempt to continue transmitting to Czech the German literary works that would not stand

censorship, to bring these works to light of the day. It took another fifteen years for *The Trial* to be published.

III. The Vestiges of Prague Ghetto: the Reception of the Czech *Trial* in the 1950s

Eisner's survival and continuous activity is an example of and analogy for the unlikely cultural continuity between the 1920s/1930s and 1950s/1960s, the prewar, newly established multi-cultural and multilingual democratic Republic and the Communist bi-national and bi-Slavic-lingual Czechoslovakia, whether in his essays on Kafka and the Prague German authors, or by his being a witness to this world that no longer existed after 1945. In 1957, Eisner's essay on Kafka was published in the June issue of *Světová literatura*, a journal edited by the writer Josef Škvorecký, and the year before *The Trial* appeared in Czech. His translation of the story "Der Bau" was published in the same issue. Eisner's ideas (sometimes without referring to him) have resonated in some other authors' writing about Kafka, such as Paul Reiman, Eduard Goldstücker, or Čestmír Jeřábek. Goldstücker and Reiman were the organizers of the 1963 Liblice Conference, and Eisner's ideas had a strong presence in this event, the first official conference on the author in Eastern Europe. Although interpreted and transformed to fit the Marxist line, Eisner's thesis is clearly recognizable. This is surprising if we consider the radical political, social and cultural changes that followed the 1948 communist coup. It constitutes evidence for the conservative nature of the cultural realm, for underground continuities that I found elsewhere as well (see chapter on Kafka in Samizdat).

The above mentioned letter of Eisner to the publishing house *Československý spisovatel* provides some glimpses into the marginal conditions Eisner lived in during the 1950s, but also yields an interesting perspective into the times. The polite tone of the correspondence between Eisner and the publishing house, the respectful rhetoric of the editor, is surprisingly civil if we consider the dramatic changes in publishing after 1948, and the fervent political rhetoric that accompanied these changes, not to mention the thousands imprisoned, the executions, gulags, and the atmosphere of terror. The 1948 communist takeover led to confiscations of private publishing houses and to an aggressively enforced censorship. Publishing was planned centrally, under control of Czech, Slovak and central federal boards, established after the Publication Law was approved in March 1949. In the new system, only books that would be "progressive, would bring instruction, refreshment and healthy entertainment" were allowed to be published (in the words of Jindřich F. Isoz). (Bauer 2003, 139) The task of the Czech National Editorial Board, which commenced its activity in June 1949, was to liquidate private publishing houses. Only state publishing houses were active. The publishing house "Czechoslovak Writer," which later published *The Trial*, was an organ of The Communist-controlled Union of Czechoslovak Writers, and considered one of the biggest successes of the post 1948 publishing.

Books that were published already, as well as titles that were planned to be published, became objects of censorship. On February 1st 1949, a list of books which were "halted" in publishing houses was created by specially appointed commissioners and discussed by the Syndicate of Czech writers. This list was ordered alphabetically according to the names of the publishers, without specifying the reasons. It contains books that were considered "unacceptable and unsuitable". (Ibid 141-145) The list comprised titles by forty-six publishers, including

Camus and Kafka's "Judgment" and *The Castle*, of the publisher Václav Petr. Camus' book had already been printed, so their distribution was prohibited. Kafka's titles were in "category III," comprising books that were sent back to the review board – with the effect of blocking publication.

The key figure in the first years of centrally planned publishing was Pavel Reiman/Paul Reimann (1902-1976), a member of the politburo of the Central Committee of the Party and the chair of the Review Board of the Central Committee. His name was connected to the harshest censorship and the most radical rhetoric. (Ibid 150) Reiman was directing the entire editorial activities of the publishing house "*Czechoslovak Writer"* until 1951-1952, when he was removed from his leading positions. A wave of protest was raised against Reiman in 1951 as part of the "fight against the enemy within the Party leadership" (a campaign that included the Slánský trial), and the new political leadership distanced itself from Reiman, who was, in reference to his German Jewish origin, criticized for not even speaking proper Czech by Vítězslav Nezval, the most important avant-garde poet of the 1920s who assumed strong pro-regime positions during the fifties.

Since the archive of *Czechoslovak Writer* has not yet been catalogued, it is difficult to understand the decision-making process behind the publication of *The Trial*, the first major work of Kafka to be published in post 1948 Czechoslovakia, and in such a prominent publishing house, conceived as the showcase of literary Communist Czechoslovakia. The censorship continued after Reiman was removed from his posts. Criticism of censorship was raised in the Union of Czechoslovak Writers in 1955/56. Revolutionary fervor was somewhat milder by 1958. The thaw after 1956 was, however, again interrupted by a period of harsher censorship. The

evidence suggests that the official power mechanisms were not as pervasive as they were in the early 1950s. The everyday work and procedures, the steps involving the publication decisions, the communication between various parts of the publishing house and the Publication Board, are still to be researched. Except for Eisner's correspondence with the publishing house, no further documents, such as those pertaining to the review process, are currently available.

The figure of Pavel Reiman is interesting in relation to Kafka. Once a facilitator of harsh censorship, Reiman published in 1958 a long article on Kafka in the journal *Nová mysl (New Mind*), an organ of the Communist Party. (Reiman 1958) We can only speculate about the reasons for his sudden interest in Kafka, who was officially deemed a prototype of the decadent bourgeois author. Reiman resembles in this respect Eduard Goldstücker. Both were once pillars of the new communist regime, and both fell out of favor. In 1953, Goldstücker received a life sentence in one of the trials connected to the Slánský trial. Both Reiman and Goldstücker were the leading figures behind the 1963 Kafka conference in Liblice. Was it their first hand experience with communist totalitarian power, the experience of falling out of favor, and state-sponsored anti-Semitism, that made them turn to Franz Kafka? Did Reiman find new connections to his Jewish origin?

Reiman's 1958 article valued Eisner's familiarity with Kafka's environment, and characterized the Prague German world as "a reactionary island amongst the majority working Czech population." Reiman then offered the sort of interpretation that became the prevailing Marxist attitude towards the writer: Kafka was a representative of the "bourgeois intelligence, who starts to understand the rotten nature of the capitalist order, but is not yet able [from the observations of the contradictions] to deduce socialist consequences, and therefore is prone to

despair." (Ibid, 52) Reiman sets his reading of Kafka against the Western "Kafka fashion." The attempts to rescue Kafka for the socialist world, epitomized by the Liblice Conference, which took place six years later, are articulated in Reiman's argument: Kafka is not the typical representative of the "contemporary reactionary and decadent ideology." Kafka's pessimism stems from his observations of "social contradictions and human poverty," but he fails to find a solution. Reiman dismisses Max Brod's interpretations of Kafka as a Jewish prophet, and Kafka's Zionism. Kafka did not think much of Judaism, writes Reiman, who also attributes Kafka's increasing interest in Judaism later in his life to his "depressions." (Ibid, 55)

According to Čermák, the first edition of Kafka's *Trial* in Czech constituted an important cultural event during a time of mild political liberalization. (Čermák 1997, 270-271) It is difficult to find evidence for this assessment. Just a handful of reviews of the novel were published. In one of them, Čestmír Jeřábek notes that Kafka "grew up as a Prague Jew of German education in double social and spiritual isolation," clearly owing his take on Kafka to Eisner. Kafka "attempted to destroy the walls of his double ghetto," to "win over his curse." Kafka strove to belong, to "sink roots into the safe soil (…) to be surrounded by people in a collective, tribal, national sense." He possessed the elemental desire of the alienated to merge with people. (Jeřábek 1958)

Eisner is crucial for Goldstücker's paper at the Liblice Conference; his ghetto theory is the foundation of his argument. Eisner's thesis captures the specific character of the Prague German literature. The authors lived in a little island as in a triple ghetto: German, German-Jewish, and bourgeois. (Goldstücker 1966, 32) Goldstücker used Eisner's topos while adapting it to fit his ideological convictions and the shifting demands of the Communist power.

Like Eisner, Goldstücker emphasizes Kafka's place of origin for understanding the author: "einige, mit dem Leben und dem Werk Franz Kafkas zusammenhängende Fragen doch am besten von Prag aus beantworten werden können."(Ibid 26) Goldstücker's approach was contested by another Liblice speaker Kusák, who insisted that the intimate knowledge of Kafka's Prague is not crucial for understanding the author.[50] The 1950s critics such as Goldstücker dwelled on the alleged insularity of Prague in Kafka's times. The assertions about the insularity of the life of the Prague Jewish German minority seem ironic if not paradoxical when we consider the isolated nature of life in Communist Czechoslovakia in the 1950s and 1960s; the limited access both to the political West and the other Soviet bloc countries, the fervent anti-Western propaganda. After the Holocaust and the expulsion of the Czech Germans in 1946, hardly anything was left in Prague of the vibrant, prewar multicultural life.

In sum, then, Eisner's importance as a translator, promoter, and interpreter of Kafka, is indisputable. Due to political circumstances, however, his contribution is only now being appreciated. Another reason for Eisner remaining obscre was the fact that translation was not always valued as highly as it is today.

Eisner is however not an "invisible" translator, nor is he an invisible "mediator." An embodiment of the complex identity and language issues of pre-World War II Czechoslovakia, his personal attempts to come to terms with his own bilingualism are reflected in his insights about Kafka's Prague as well as in his translation Eisner's claim to understand Kafka was based

[50] For more about this polemic as well as the reception of Kafka in the 1950s see my chapter on Goldstücker and the 1963 Liblice Conference.

on his intimate knowledge of the author's environment. Eisner originated a "ghetto" discourse, which was however concealed behind the theory of Deleuze and Guattari, and behind the official writing about Kafka in the late 1950s and 1960s Czechoslovakia.

Rather than being either insider or outsider, or in the margins, Eisner occupied a liminal space between visibility and invisibility. Creating a massive work, he engaged in a cultural mission which is yet to be fully appreciated.

Chapter II

A Controversial Testimony: Gustav Janouch's *Gespräche mit Kafka*

Gustav Janouch's *Gespräche mit Kafka* (*Conversations with Kafka,* 1951, expanded 1968) has been read both by Kafka scholars and a wider popular audience. It comprises sketches, from one paragraph to several pages long, which, according to their author, describe his encounters with Franz Kafka from the spring of 1920 to 1921/2. Despite scholarly doubts about the credibility of the book's claim to represent conversations between its author and Kafka, it has continued to exert influence and be quoted in scholarly and popular writing publications.

Goldstücker (1966, 1983) and Čermák (2005) traced the appeal and influence of Janouch's text to its claim to provide actual first hand testimonial information, shedding light on the least documented period in Kafka's life. Critics such as Hartmut Binder, Eduard Goldstücker, Peter F. Neumeyer (1971) and Josef Čermák contested the authenticity of Janouch's representations of his dialogues with Kafka and criticized the authoritative status the Conversations have assumed within Kafka's oeuvre, comparable to that of his diaries and letters. Other critics, such as Heinz Politzer (1962), Ray Pascal (1956), and Deleuze & Guattari, to name a few, accepted Janouch's text as the authentic voice of Kafka. Deleuze and Guattari and Roland Barthes quoted Janouch's Kafka along with Kafka's diaries.

I argue that the positive reception Janouch's two editions of his book received resulted from the desire of many readers, especially in Western Europe and North America after the Second World War, to establish a link to Kafka the person, a link that Kafka's own works failed

to provide. In the absence of any other contemporary documents, such as interviews, *Conversations* were the closest approximation available.

By contrast, the reception of Janouch in Prague has been less than warm. Goldstücker condemned the text as inauthentic early on, and terminated his contacts with Janouch. Čermák chose a more nuanced approach, attempting to distinguish fabrications from useful observations by using the usual methods of historians, search for corroborating evidence, compare the factual claims of Janouch's text with independent sources, compare the text with other earlier texts and look for similarities that may indicate what were Janouch's sources, other than actual conversations with Kafka.[51] Čermák's own text is however problematic as a critical study, because it does not provide references. While Čermák makes many critical claims about the authorship of Janouch's texts, we have to rely on his own word about the existence and content of archival sources that he claims to have used but did not document.

I attempt to understand the reasons for the positive and negative receptions of the text that correspond roughly with East and West. Though my approach is mostly literary rather than historical, I add here a more historical sub-chapter about Janouch's place in the post-war period of Czechoslovak history. I discovered in the archives relevant documents about Janouch that shed new light on his personal history and personality and the broader circumstances in which the *Conversations* were composed. This new information about Janouch allows us to read the *Conversations* from a new vantage point.

[51] Čermák provided also a chapter on Michal Mareš, the writer and anarchist who informed Wagenbach's biography of Kafka.

The *Conversations* are interesting from the generic point of view. Why consider Janouch's text an authentic source? Who assigned to them the value of an authentic testimony – their author, or the readers? In what should lay their authenticity and genuineness? Accordingly, in this chapter, I discuss Janouch's *Gespräche mit Kafka* as a generically complex text, which continued to appeal to many scholars as well as popular audiences.

Although Čermák placed Janouch's text in a broader context of forgeries, hoaxes, and fakes, he did not distinguish sufficiently between these diverse categories and used the various terms interchangeably. I discuss the differences between forgery and fraud and distinguish the text from forgery on the one hand, and from hoax on another. Second, I open up the question of reliability of memory and testimony in relation to documents. I use the analytical tools of literary criticism rather than that of the documentary historian like the previous scholars who worked on Janouch's text to pronounce it a simple forgery. I argue that the *Conversations* are based on memories, rather than documents, and their credibility is undermined not just by factual mistakes and implausible claims (as an historian would argue), but also by the discursive narrative strategies of the author-narrator. The text uses phrases that straightforwardly indicate the temporal distance between Janouch's writing and its subject, which are standard in memoirs. I suggest that Janouch's *Conversations* have continued to appeal to readers precisely because of the gap that distinguishes them from Kafka's far more complex and elusive "aphorisms" in his diaries. Through *Conversations*, Janouch was constructing his own past, his own personal history, looking back at his own self from twenty or even forty years' distance.

Although Janouch lived in Prague almost all his life, until his death in 1968, *Conversations* was published in Czech for the first time only in 2009, more than fifty years after

the first edition appeared in 1951. Janouch's book also provides a rare insight into the Czech reception of Kafka, or lack thereof, in the 1950s.

The Warm Reception in the West

All critics agree that *Conversations* is an engaging text. Janouch opted for a seemingly simple narrative style and a unified structure: most of the one hundred ninety entries (in the expanded second, 1968, edition) are structured similarly; some are no longer than a paragraph while others are several pages long. The beginning of a typical entry introduces us to the topic of the conversation, or explains the circumstance of the encounter. "Im Deutschen Theater spielte man das Drama *Der Sohn* von Walter Hasenclever." (Janouch II, 101) Or: „Franz Kafka lachte, als er bei mir einen kleinen Gedichtband von Michael Mareš sah." (Janouch II, 122) This circumstance sparks off a conversation, which is often sustained by Janouch's questions. Janouch asks often suggestive questions and Kafka obligingly replies. Most entries conclude with a quotation from Kafka, often with a pointed conclusion.

Kafka's close friends Max Brod and Dora Dymant believed that they heard the voice of their friend in Janouch's book. Max Brod referred to Janouch's *Conversations* in the second, expanded edition of his biography of Kafka. (1954) Brod compared Janouch to Eckermann, and valued Janouch for recording Kafka's utterances still during his lifetime. (Brod 1991, 187) Brod reported that he received a letter from Janouch in May 1947, inquiring whether Janouch could mail him his "Tagebucheintragungen über Franz Kafka" for which he tried to find a publisher.

With a considerable delay, Brod received the manuscript. He recalled his joy when reading Janouch's text:

> Nun las ich die Aufzeichnungen und war frappiert von der Fülle des Neuen, das auf mich eindrang und das ganz deutlich und usnverwechselbar den Stempel des Genies trug, wie es sich in Kafka manifestiert hatte. Auch das Äußere Kafkas, seine Sprechweise, seine besonders ausdrucksvolle und dabei zarte Weise, mit den Händen zu gestikulieren, und ähnlich Physiognomisches war auf das anschaulichste wiedergegeben. Mir war zumute, als sei mein Freund plötzlich wieder zum Leben erwacht und soeben ins Zimmer getreten. (Brod 1991, 188)

Brod also recalled how he read passages from the manuscript to Kafka's companion Dora Dymant, who visited Brod in Israel.

> Brod shares the impression that Janouch's text made on her:
>
> Sie war sofort sehr eingenommen davon und erkannte den unverwechselbaren Stil Kafkas und seine Denkweise in allem, was durch Janouch aufbewahrt worden ist. Sie empfand das Buch als wahre Wiederbegegnung mit Kafka und war erschüttert. (Brod 1991, 188)

Brod concludes that the genuineness or authenticity of Janouch's manuscript was confirmed by two witnesses: "So ist die Echtheit dieser Gespräche durch zwei Zeugen erhärtet (…)" (Brod 1991, 188) A third authentication came from *Briefe an Milena*, edited by Willy Haas and published in 1952, in which Kafka mentions his encounters with the young Janouch. Brod helped Janouch to publish his *Conversations* with Fischer Verlag.

Janouch knew Kafka since 1920 and probably even earlier since 1919, until 1921 or possibly 1922, when Janouch was sixteen to nineteen years old. Kafka mentions the young poet in his letters to Milena Jesenská (in 1920) and in a letter to Robert Klopstock from 1921.

(Čermák 2005, 58-59) As we learn from Goldstücker, Janouch was at the beginning of the 1950s one of five direct witnesses to Kafka's last years together with Brod, Dora Dymant, Felix Weltsch, and Robert Klopstock. Subsequently, many authors used Janouch's *Conversations* as a source. Quotations ascribed to Kafka by Janouch are scattered in numerous canonical texts on Kafka by authors such as Heinz Politzer, Roy Pascal, Roland Barthes, Marthe Robert, Maurice Blanchot, and Deleuze and Guattari, to name just a few.

Heinz Politzer quotes from Janouch generously in his *Franz Kafka, Parable and Paradox* (1962), introducing his quotations without a hint of doubt: "Toward the end of his life Kafka said to Gustav Janouch…." (Politzer, 106) Roy Pascal in his book *The German Novel* (1956) expresses doubts in a footnote: "I must confess that I cannot repress suspicions of this book. So many of Kafka's statements here answer so neatly the questions one would like to ask him. Can the memories of a boy, even when prompted by a notebook, carry so far?" (Pascal, 318) This cautious remark aside, Pascal quoted Janouch three times in his chapter on Kafka.

Deleuze and Guattari quote from *Conversations* in their influential 1974 monograph *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature.* In the second chapter, the words of Janouch's Kafka are used to seal the Marxist, anti-psychiatry criticism that the French theorists make about psychoanalysis. They end a paragraph with a quotation from *Conversations* (italics mine):

> The mistake of psychoanalysis was to trap itself and us, since it lives off of the market value or neurosis from which it gains all its surplus value. "*Dramas and tragedies are written about [the revolt of the son against the father], yet in reality it is material for comedy*." (Deleuze, 10-11)

The next reference to Janouch's Kafka, in Chapter 4, again ends a paragraph:

> Expression must break forms, encourage ruptures and new sproutings. When a form is broken, one must reconstruct the content that will necessarily be part of a rupture in the order of things. To take over, to anticipate, the material. "*Art is a mirror, which goes 'fast,' like a watch – sometimes*." (Deleuze, 28)

This is a particularly popular metaphor with Deleuze; he referred to it also in chapter 6 (59). Both quotations from Janouch are strikingly incongruous with the language of the preceding theoretical texts: in contrast to them, "Kafka's" words are laconic, pedestrian, conspicuously simple, almost clichéd. They are unlike the short, complex texts that Kafka selected from his diaries and "Quadrathefte" printed by Max Brod in 1937. (Kafka 1937)

In the first two examples, "Kafka's" concise, aphoristic sentences serve as a final touch, a confirmation of what was stated before, almost a superfluous baroque decoration. The quotation in Deleuze's chapter 6 plays a more substantial role. The words of "Kafka" serve as an illustration of a critical stance towards the Russian Revolution and to his work as an employee in the Workers' Insurance Company.

> The Russian Revolution seems to Kafka to be the production of a new segment, rather than an overthrowing and a renewal. (…) "*[The flood of the] Revolution evaporates and leaves behind only the slime of a new bureaucracy. The chains of tormented mankind are made out of red tape*." Between the Hapsburg bureaucracy and the new Soviet bureaucracy, there is no question of denying that there has been a change, there is a new piece in the machine, or rather, a piece has made up an entirely new machine. "[*The Worker's Accident Insurance Institution] is a creation of the labor movement. It should therefore be filled with the radiant spirit of progress. But what happens? The Institution is a dark nest of bureaucrats, in which I function as the solitary display-Jew*." (Deleuze, 58)

Deleuze and Guattari quote Janouch as a source equal to Kafka's diaries and letters. The words about the Russian Revolution impressed also Heinz Politzer. These quotations construct Kafka as a social critic, an image that is not strongly anchored in Kafka's own writing. Janouch's texts – and especially the additions in the 1968 edition – play into an image of Kafka, popular in the 1960s and 1970s as a social critic, an engaged writer, even a socialist.

Kafka is the subject of Roland Barthes' *Camera Lucida*, yet he quotes Janouch to illustrate his ideas about the medium of photography:

> Ultimately – or at the limit – in order to see a photograph well, it is best to look away or close your eyes. '*The necessary condition for an image is sight," Janouch told Kafka; and Kafka smiled and replied: "We photograph things in order to drive them out of our minds. My stories are a way of shutting my eyes*." (Barthes, 53)

Janouch presented Kafka as a master-aphorist, providing pieces of wisdom on widely diverse subjects, from the Russian Revolution to photography.

Janouch's *Conversations* still exert influence today. For example, in the permanent exhibition in the recently opened Kafka Museum in Prague, curated by Juan Insua, an Argentinian intellectual living in Barcelona,[52] one of the sections is devoted to exploring Kafka as a *ravachol*, a colloquial word for a rascal etymologically based on the name of the nineteenth-century French anarchist Ravachol. The story about *ravachol*, linking Kafka to anarchism, originated with Janouch. The presence of the *ravachol* materials in the Kafka museum is intriguing since the exhibition's catalogue and accompanying texts were reviewed (and

[52] Prior to becoming the permanent exhibition in Prague, this exhibition was shown in the Jewish Museum in New York.

criticized) by Josef Čermák, who in his book dedicates considerable space to refuting the legend about Kafka's contacts with Prague anarchists. Čermák's (2005) objections were not taken into a consideration.

A leading paper at a Kafka conference in Heidelberg in the summer of 2008 opened with a quotation from Janouch:

> In uns leben noch immer die dunklen Winkel, geheimnisvollen Gänge, blinden Fenster, schmutzigen Höfe, lärmenden Kneipen und verschlossenen Gasthäuser. Wir gehen durch die breiten Straßen der neuerbauten Stadt. Doch unsere Schritte und Blicke sind unsicher.(…)" (Janouch II, 42)

This quotation about the vanished Prague ghetto is frequently encountered in writings about Kafka and Prague. Yet these are Janouch's words, not Kafka's.

The persistent willingness to read Janouch's text as the authentic voice of Kafka is particularly striking given the obvious doubts about the authenticity and reliability of the text that voice the Czech critics. Why was this text taken so seriously by so many important scholars?

Janouch makes of Kafka "a broad-ranging intellectual, who understands everything from philosophy to politics, and has an answer ready to every question the interviewer poses. Janouch guides him through the terrain of his contemporary interests and his reading." (Čermák 2005, 96) Many scholars accepted the text that offered easy answers to the questions that they would have liked to ask. Janouch formulated a version of Kafka without the difficulties, complexities and ambiguities of Kafka's own language, and he addressed topics that are hard to find in Kafka's oeuvre, or not in such a straightforward guise, such as Kafka's social engagement, particularly

popular with the Western critics of the 1960s and 1970s. It was precisely the more fanciful parts of Janouch's text that sparked the imagination like Kafka's alleged sympathies to anarchism.

The ease with which many scholars accepted Janouch's *Conversations* betrays their desire to connect to Kafka beyond his texts and the grave, in a more personal and casual manner; they wanted to reach Kafka the person, not just the writer. Yet nothing in Kafka's work grants an easy, unmediated access; the readers, scholars as well as the popular audience, wished to touch the elusive Kafka, to appropriate him, to bring him down closer to their everyday reality. Janouch provided the missing link: *Conversations* became a substitute for non-existing interviews with Kafka. Janouch, for his part, behaved like the Inspector General from Gogol's play, supplying his willingly gullible readers with what they desired, while enjoying writing, reconstructing and embellishing his own past, and reaping some profits along the way.

The desire to connect with Kafka the man rather than the writer may well be connected to his status as a prophet without a religion, which Kafka acquired in the early interpretations, such as Max Brod's. A prophet should offer more than a text; he should offer answers to the most ancient question: how to live properly. Janouch's Kafka is a celebrity guide, sometimes literally so, as he guides Janouch around Prague. Postwar Europe felt the need for such a prophet, and Kafka fitted the bill, but one would look in vain in his actual writings for any specific guidance.

Back in Prague, there was no demand for a prophet or a guide to life. Those who subscribed to the Communist ideology had their own pantheon, and the non-Communists have not looked for any alternative to Lenin or Fučík. Instead, they submitted the writings of their compatriot to critical analysis and dismissed the text as well as its author.

No Prophet in his own Land: The Czech Reception of Janouch

Already the first edition of *Conversations* (1951) provoked some uneasiness;[53] it was, however, the expanded second edition (1968) which raised more substantial criticism. (Neumeyer 1971) Janouch's most fervent critics were the Czech scholars Eduard Goldstücker and Josef Čermák. Both scholars compare Janouch's text with the findings of Kafka scholarship; but also describe Janouch's stylistic devices and psychological assumptions as revealing the inauthentic nature of the text. The Czech critic Josef Čermák, in his recent monograph (2005) on "fabrications and hoaxes" surrounding Kafka, argued against the credibility of both editions, and left very little space for reading *Conversations* as a reliable source.

Goldstücker offered the earliest condemnation of *Conversations*. He expressed his conviction that *Conversations* are an "apocryphal piece of writing, which was unjustifiably so to say included in Kafka canon" for the first time in 1966 at a conference in Berlin. He claimed it was a "falsification" in more detail in a conference paper presented in Paris in 1978. His article, "Kafka's Eckermann?" was published in Czech in the yearbook of the samizdat journal *Kritický sborník* in 1983. (Goldstücker 1983, 50-66)[54] Goldstücker's attack focuses on temporal inconsistencies and anachronisms, the implausibilities of Janouch's rhetorical "defense" strategies, his dependence on Max Brod's "authentication," and the highly stylized, staged quality of the *Conversations*. He also claims that Janouch based some of the information in

[53] As Peter Demetz wrote to me, his father, Hans Demetz, voiced his distrust of Janouch's book long before Goldstücker. For another example, see Pascal (1956).
[54] The article came out in German in *Franz Kafka*. *Themen und Probleme*. Ed. Claude David, Göttingen 1980, 238-255 and in Czech in samizdat in the Yearbook of *Kritický sborník*, Prague, 1983, 50-66. I quote from the Czech version of the article.

Conversations on materials that were published earlier, mainly on Brod's biography of Kafka, published in 1937. (Goldstücker 1983, 55; Goldstücker 1989, 300)

The 1951 edition, argues Goldstücker, is a highly unreliable text, containing temporal inconsistencies. On several occasions, Janouch's text claims to have the narrator meet Kafka in Prague when in fact Kafka was not in Prague at the time. (Goldstücker 1983, 54) In the timespan when Janouch was allegedly meeting with the writer, between March 1920 and probably June 1922 (altogether 27 months), Kafka spent 13 months outside of Prague, which dramatically reduces the timespan when the alleged meetings and walks could have taken place. (Goldstücker 1983, 51) Janouch describes almost 200 encounters, which means that the ailing Kafka would have had to spend a considerable portion of his time in Prague in the company of the young Janouch. This is not impossible, yet it is very unlikely, not least because of Kafka's deteriorating health in those years.

Janouch's "image of Kafka conspicuously resembles that of Brod and 'confirms' it." (Goldstücker 1983, 55) Goldstücker surmises that this similarity was calculated: Janouch needed to impress Brod since the success of *Conversations* depended on Brod's "authentication."

Janouch attributes to Kafka words that apparently come from another source. He uses words resembling those of Trotsky, as in "das erhabenste und am wenigsten abtastbare Teil aller Schöpfung, die Zeit," or the triadic "personal relationships, science, and art" transformed into "prayer, art and science." (Goldstücker 1983, 57) As we know from *Briefe an Milena*, Janouch brought to Kafka a portrait of Trotsky that he produced. Janouch was familiar with Trotsky, and could have put some of his words into Kafka's mouth.

Goldstücker analyses what he sees as the careful web that Janouch constructs in anticipation of challenges that the various newly appearing circumstances could pose to the credibility of *Conversations*. Similar to the animal in Kafka's story "Der Bau," "[a]lso he [Janouch] created a construction, which he has to secure, post fact, by various alterations and additions against the new, real or imaginary dangers." (Goldstücker 1983, 61) One such "danger" lies in the publication of Kafka's *Briefe an Milena* in 1952 (one year after *Conversations* came out.). Janouch is mentioned several times in Kafka's letters, sometimes disparagingly, once as the "entsetzlich lästige Junge." Janouch felt compelled to show that he was aware of this situation. (Goldstücker 1983, 60) In a story "Die Feuerprobe," included in his collection *Prager Begegnungen* (Janouch 1959), the narrator reacts to Kafka's complaints to Milena about the bothersome young poet. Kafka wrote in a letter on July 26th, 1920:

> Und jetzt noch der Dichter, der erste, er ist auch Holzschneider, Radierer, und geht nicht weg und ist so voll Leben, dass er alles auf mich hinauswirft und sieht wie ich vor Ungeduld zittere, die Hand über diesem Brief zittert, der Kopf liegt mir schon auf der Brust und er geht nicht fort, der gute, lebendige, glücklich-unglückliche, ausserordentliche aber mir gerade jetzt entsetzlich lästige Junge. (Kafka 1954, 148)

Goldstücker however quotes only the more critical part of Kafka's characterization, and skips the more favourable adjectives "der gute," "lebendige," and "ausserordentliche," which also form Kafka's portrait of his young friend.

In "Die Feuerprobe," Janouch composes a new conversation with Kafka, which takes into consideration Kafka's frustrations and makes it seem as if the young Janouch was aware of them at the time. The first person narrator asks himself:

> Stiehlst du ihm nicht seine Zeit? Bist du nicht zu aufdringlich? Will er nicht allein sein? So fragte ich mich, als ich über die Stiege hinauf zu meinem Vater ging, und ahnte gar nicht, wie nahe ich damals der Wahrheit war. Das erfuhr ich erst viele, viele Jahre später, als ich die aus Nachlass veröffentlichten „Briefe an Milena" las (…) (Janouch 1959, 102)

Parts of this new conversation are included in the expanded version of the 1968 *Conversations*. Goldstücker concludes that Janouch's self-critical attitude was inspired by *Briefe an Milena*. But Goldstücker's assertion remains a speculation: Janouch says merely that he was aware of his disturbing effect on Kafka at the time, and reading Kafka's letters confirmed this feeling. As tempting it is to attribute this new conversation to the inspiration of reading Kafka's letters, Goldstücker cannot prove that. Unlike *Conversations*, "Die Feuerprobe," does not claim to be based on diaries, but to be a memoir. The inclusion of the additional text in the second edition of *Conversations* is however problematic, precisely due to their self-professed status as a document. Goldstücker claims that also other conversations in the 1968 edition, expressing a similar attitude, were probably written after 1952. One of them reads:

> Wenn ich es mir heute recht überlege, so muß ich gestehen, dass ich mich Kafka gegenüber recht rücksichtslos benahm: ich kam häufig unangemeldet und wann es mir gerade passte in seine Kanzlei. Trotzdem empfing er mich aber immer mit freundlichem Lachen und weit entgegengestreckter Hand. (*Gespräche II*, 66)

The "ich" along with the temporal distance ("heute") in the first sentence is particularly striking. Goldstücker does not comment on this, but the reflective mode is out of place in the overall thrust of the *Conversations*, which the author presents as (unadorned, unmediated) record of his conversations which he noted in the days they took place, in the early 1920s. This entry is perhaps the most "honest" or "authentic" in the book in that it betrays the author's attitude at the

moment when he apparently wrote the entry: long after his encounters with Kafka, with the benefit of hindsight.

Goldstücker makes an important point in noting how crucial Brod's affirmative attitude towards the manuscript was for the book's further existence. The book was well received due to the fact that it came out in a propitious moment when any information about Kafka was in great demand, and in that the book covered the late period in Kafka's life only sparsely covered in Brod's biography and in the diaries. Following the first edition, Janouch was contacted by numerous people (often from abroad) who sought an authentic witness in search of any information related to the Prague writer. Since Janouch, argues Goldstücker, could not provide any substantial information, he showed his visitors Prague, "attempting, whenever possible, to create links between the demonstrated landmarks and Kafka." (Goldstücker 1983, 61-62) Janouch goes even a step further tongue-in-cheek by making a tourist guide from Kafka in the expanded edition of *Conversations*. Kafka points out to Janouch various landmarks, mostly churches, and lectures about them extensively.

Goldstücker points out Janouch's directorial role in the narrative structure of the *Conversations*. He contrasts Janouch's strategy with that of the ultimate model of the genre, Eckermann's dialogues with Goethe:

> Kafkas Eckermann arbeitet gerade umgekehrt wie sein Goethescher Vorgänger. Der inszenierte seine Gespräche nicht, gab ihnen keine Richtung, sondern zeichnete bloss auf. Janouch demgegen geht mit Kafka um, wie mit einem dressierten Delphin, der auf seine bunten Balle wartet, um sie dem

> siebzenjährigen Adepten der Poesie zurückzuspielen. (Goldstücker 1989, 300-301)[55]

Eckermann's *Gespräche mit Goethe* form a volume in Goethe's collected works and became a part of Goethe's canon. The two books differ substantially, but Goldstücker does not elaborate on the differences. Each of Eckermann's entries starts with a precise indication of date ("Montag, den 3. November 1823"); this information is missing in Janouch's entries. Eckermann records mostly what has happened on that very day, and consequently his entries resemble a diary. Janouch's entries, by contrast, are very vague about the time when they took place, and are obviously written from a much longer temporal distance. Similarly to Janouch, Eckermann marks Goethe's words by quotation marks; his reconstruction of Goethe's words however happened shortly after the encounters, which significantly increases the reliability of these records.

An important section of Goldstücker's article is dedicated to Kafka's alleged affiliation with Prague anarchists, a "legend" that "haunts Kafka literature since Brod's biography of Franz Kafka." (Goldstücker 1983, 62) This "legend" rests on a single testimony by the former Czech anarchist Michal Kácha, who told Brod that Kafka visited his organization. Brod received this information four to five years after Kafka's death, after Brod published his novel *Zauberreich der Liebe* (1928), in which he pays tribute to Kafka. Goldstücker, who knew Kácha, insists that the anarchism "legend" is not corroborated by any other evidence. In the expanded edition of his

[55] Goldstücker's humorous metaphor of Kafka as a trained dolphin, which returns balls to a young poet-novice, unwittingly echoes a legend surrounding Kafka of Michal Mareš's provenience. Mareš lets Kafka play with a multi-coloured ball in Prague's Old Town Square sometime in the Spring 1924, a few months before his death; a circumstance that Čermák considers fantastic, not least because Kafka spent in Prague at most two weeks in the year when he died. (Čermák 2005, 44)

book, Janouch elaborates on Kafka's encounters with the anarchists. Janouch has Kafka claim that Max Brod accompanied him to these encounters, (Janouch II, 128) which Goldstücker dismisses as a lie. Brod died in 1968, and it is not clear whether he read the new expanded version of *Conversations*. (Goldstücker 1983, 63) He certainly did not comment on it one way or the other.

Gespräche mit Kafka, which made him internationally renowned, is as controversial as Janouch's life; both were until recently peculiarly missing from the Czech cultural landscape. His literary career remained and remains obscure. In his 1980 recollections of encounters with Janouch in 1960s in Prague, Leo Brod offers a sympathetic view of Janouch and praises his book *Prager Begegnungen*, and concedes that Janouch never belonged either to the Czechs or to the Germans. He was "fast als ein Ausgestossener auf beiden Seiten behandelt." (Leo Brod, 523) He was not one of the writers of the "Prager Kreis," but was not perceived as belonging among the Czechs either. "Es war die Tragödie eines treuen Pragers, den nicht einmal Max Brod in seinem ‚Prager Kreis' erwähnt hat."[56] (Leo Brod 1980, 524) Leo Brod views Janouch's *Conversations* with sympathy:

> Ich schätze Janouch als augezeichneten Erzähler und guten Stilisten. Daß er seine gewiß nicht intime Bekannschaft mit Franz Kafka ausgebeutet hat, um sich als Tat- und Lebenszeugen von Franz Kafka auszugeben, habe ich seiner Eulenspiegelnatur nie verargt. Er wollte auf der Kafka-Welle gewiß mitschwimmen und seine nicht üppigen Einnahmen als Autor verbessern, was ihm gelungen ist. (Leo Brod 1980, 525)

[56] Max Brod (1966) mentions approvingly Janouch's *Gespraeche* and *Prager Begegnungen*. Janouch's *Gespraeche* „den Wert der *einzigen ausführlichen* Aufzeichnung eines Zeitgenossen neben meiner Kafka-Biographie beanspruchen können." (Brod 1966, 193)

Janouch was undoubtedly as talented as a writer as he was as a musician.

Goldstücker terminated his personal contacts with Janouch in the fall of 1960. (Goldstücker 1983, 50) Janouch was a *persona non grata* at the 1963 Kafka conference in Liblice. Alexej Kusák, a participant in the conference, recalls how he attempted to smuggle Janouch in by listing him as a technician of the film crew. All participants, including the technicians, had to be approved; Goldstücker banned Janouch from the conference. Kusák reproduced his dialogue with Goldstücker, which was to take place before the conference opened:[57]

> "Why did you three times delete Janouch from the list of participants?"
>
> "He has nothing to say about Kafka."
>
> "But he is one of the few, perhaps the last, who demonstrably knew Kafka. And he wrote a book which was read by all foreign Kafka scholars."
>
> "It contains only fabrications. There is no place for Janouch at a scientific conference."

Kusák reports that he asked Goldstücker what was *the real reason* for excluding Janouch:

> I know, Janouch has many ugly things on his conscience, I understand that as a man who does not have best memories of police, you don't want to invite a man connected to the police, but why do you restrict others from inviting him, for example the television? Why do you want to be the only one who should determine who is credible and who is not?

Kusák expressed his indignation: "This conference, which was supposed to stand at the beginning of the process of coming to terms with the Stalinist past, is, right at its beginnings, unfortunately marked by Stalinist methods." (Kusák 2003, 48-49)

[57] Translation from Czech is mine.

This entire passage however reads as a projection of Kusák's contemporary views onto the past. The assessment of the conference (as an opportunity to come to terms with Stalinism) reads like an anachronistic projection of a later assessment of the conference onto the past. Curiously, Kusák's memoir uses the same questionable stylistic device as Janouch's *Conversations*, in marking its protagonists' speeches with quotation marks. How credible it is that Kusák would remember the words that were uttered more than forty years ago? He does not mention a reliable source like a diary or other notes taken at the time.

Goldstücker did not ease his judgment of Janouch even decades after the conference. In his memoir, *Prozesse*, he tells how he presented his objections to Max Brod who visited Prague in 1964, for the first time after twenty-five years. Goldstücker apparently knew about Janouch's collaboration with the secret police already before the conference:

> Unter den Klavierspielern in Nachtlokalen suchte (und sucht) die Polizei mit Vorliebe Informanten zu gewinnen. Es besteht kein Zweifel, dass Janouch eine solche Funktion ausübte und dass er in ihr, vor allem nach dem Krieg, „Verdienste" erwarb. Noch im Sommer 1945 wurde er nach Karlsbad geschickt. Von einem Mann, der in den ersten Monaten nach dem Mai 1945 eine hohe Funktion im Staatsicherheitsdienst bekleidete, noch ehe die Russen von ihm Besitz ergriffen, erfuhr ich, dass Janouch bereits damals mit ihnen zusammenarbeitete. Seine Aufgabe laut dieser Mitteilung war es, hungernde deutsche Wissenschaftler in die Stadt einzuladen und sie dort den Russen auszuliefern. (Goldstücker 1989, 299-300)

It is obvious that Goldstücker knew about the links between Janouch and the Secret Police, although it is not clear when he found out. It could have been the fall of 1960, which Goldstücker indicated as the time when he terminated his contacts with Janouch. From his vehement refusals to admit Janouch to the conference, it is apparent that he knew of it at the time.

Josef Čermák's recent monograph, *Franz Kafka: Fabrications and Mystifications* (2005), is the first book-length study on the topic. Čermák includes a chapter on the anarchist Michal Mareš, whom he identifies as the original source of the "anarchistic legend." The monograph sets Janouch's text in context of the more general overview of the Czech reception of Kafka, elaborates on some of the points raised by Goldstücker, and concludes with an autobiographical sketch of Janouch that Čermák claims to have based on archival materials made available in the 1990s, though as I noted earlier, it is impossible for the reader to trace his sources. Čermák calls Janouch's texts "suggestive forgeries," but also a mystification, and frames them in a broad and diverse context of forgeries.

Čermák describes Michal Mareš as the source of the "anarchist legend" (Ibid, 28); it was Mareš who informed Klaus Wagenbach's 1958 *Franz Kafka: Biographie seiner Jugend, 1883-1912* (later the principal source for Deleuze and Guttari). Michal Mareš (1893-1971), a Czech-German journalist, writer, and anarchist, was in contact with Kafka in 1909-1913 and 1920-1922. Janouch's version of Kafka's encounters with the anarchists is based on two textual sources: Mareš's 1946 piece "Meeting with Franz Kafka" (Setkání s Franzem Kafkou), written in Czech, and Brod's novel *Stefan Rott*, which came out in 1931. While the 1951 *Conversations* briefly describe Kafka's very fleeting and superficial relationship to the Prague anarchists, the topic is developed much further in the 1968 edition. Janouch added a long entry which circles around the word *ravachol*, derived from the name of the French anarchist Ravachol; in its colloquial version, it came to denote a criminal, a rascal. According to Janouch's story, Kafka was called a *ravachol* as a child by the family's cook, an incident that deeply traumatized him and later inspired him to study the lives of important anarchists, Godwin, Proudhon, Stirner,

Bakunin, Kropotkin, Tucker and Tolstoy and attend meetings of Prague anarchists. Janouch's Kafka concludes: "Alle Juden sind – so wie ich – ausgestossene Ravachols. Ich spüre noch die Hiebe und Fusstritte der bösen Buben auf dem Umweg nach Hause, doch ich kann nicht mehr raufen. Ich besitze nicht mehr die Kraft der Jugend." (Janouch II, 128-129)

Čermák argues that Mareš's claims about Kafka's numerous contacts with the Prague anarchists and Mareš's role as Kafka's „instructor in anarchism" are fabricated. Kafka has no police record from the period 1906-1913, which would be very unlikely had he been involved in anarchist activities. (Čermák 2005, 42) Similarly to Janouch, Mareš narrates many stories of his encounters with Kafka, mentions places where they met and a number of subjects (political, musical, and artistic, among others) they discussed. Čermák exposes these various incidents as legends.[58]

Čermák outlines "the reality of Kafka's encounters with Janouch," and quotes the instances from Kafka's letters to Milena Jesenská and a letter to Robert Klopstock, in which Kafka refers to the young poet Janouch. (Ibid, 58-59) Čermák discusses the various contradictions in Janouch's Prefaces to both editions and finds Janouch's rhetorical legitimizations, which Čermák (2005, 73) calls "mystification mythology," implausible.

[58] Mareš helped Jews during the war, and in the aftermath of the war, he reported, as journalist, about the atrocities committed on the Czech borders during the so called "odsun," or expulsion of Germans, by the "Red Garda" commandos. Curiously, he reported on the sort of crimes for which Janouch was arrested in 1946. Both Mareš and Janouch spent time in prison, but in different political eras. Mareš was sentenced for seven years in November 1948, after the communist coup, on apparently trumped up charges. (Koukal 1999, 21-22)

Unlike Goldstücker, who attempted to prove wholesale the inauthenticity (nevěrohodnost) of Janouch's text, Čermák, like Hartmut Binder (1979) attempts to distinguish truth from falsifications. Čermák maintains that "it is possible to dig out, from the sediments of mystifications, inventions, errors and non-truth some grains of valuable pieces of knowledge" (Čermák 2005, 81), such as some interesting, mostly background information about Prague cinemas or the New Prague German Theatre. (Ibid, 135) Čermák analyses numerous instances in the text and correlates them with established historical evidence, exposing Janouch's incongruities. He brings a long list of examples and distinguishes what is improbable from what is probable. He dismisses Janouch's image of Kafka as being contemptuous of his job at the workers' insurance company; even if he was, it is very unlikely that Kafka would have shared his unlikely contempt with the young Janouch. Čermák also notes that to some extent, Kafka's alleged words conspicuously resemble Janouch's own post-war pseudo-revolutionary tendencies and his own extremist political opinions on both the left and the right. (Ibid, 107)

Čermák discusses the aphoristic nature of Janouch's *Conversations.* As Goldstücker noted, all Janouch's conversations are similarly structured and end with a pointed aphorism, a very unnatural form in natural speech. At the same time Čermák insists that it is this aphoristic form that assisted in persuading readers of the authenticity of Janouch's text; Janouch was able to imitate well Kafka's language and style. (Ibid, 114) Kafka indeed made a selection of "aphorisms," from his diaries, which were published by Max Brod in 1937 in Prague (along with other "aphorisms" that Brod selected from Kafka's works.). Kafka did not use the term aphorism for his various "Betrachtungen," "Forschungen," "Sprüche," or "Beschreibungen." Janouch may have found inspiration in these short texts. The qualitative difference between Kafka's short texts

and Janouch's imitations is however apparent. The aphorisms in Janouch's book are inferior to the ones that we find in Kafka's diaries, but this difference in quality can hardly be attributed solely to the difference between written and recorded spoken utterance.

Čermák concludes that *Conversations* are the result of a twenty-year long lasting literary "mystification." (Čermák 2005, 137) The "mystifying intention" of both editions was identical. (Ibid, 139) Čermák doubts that Janouch ever prepared a manuscript for the publisher Josef Florian in 1926/27 based on his diaries, as he claimed. Both versions of his book rest on:

> A pack of improbabilities and coincidences, followed by breakneck explanations. (…) In the expanded edition, apparently encouraged by his success and the smooth reception of his conclusions, he took the risk of letting loose the bridle of his imagination, and presented Kafka as a detailed expert on Prague's landmarks or contemporary domestic and world politics. Even the literary expression of his statements is less persuasive, more watered-down, and chatty. With the increase in confidence decreased caution. He does not fear to borrow and adapt passages from Kafka scholarship, e.g. about Werfel from Brod, or create bold parallels to the real stories from Kafka's life. (Ibid, 139)

Čermák however praises Janouch's skills as a talented stylist, his "problematic intentions" notwithstanding. (Ibid, 141)

"Das Chaos als Prinzip": Janouch's Life

Janouch's *Conversations* were published in many translations and editions abroad, but not in Czechoslovakia. He came to be known to the world as the author of *Conversations with Franz Kafka*. His other literary texts were also published outside of Czechoslovakia, mostly in German speaking countries. Only after 1989, following the opening of archives, we can learn more about

his life, which as I show bear significant implications on the evaluation of his texts. I found new, relevant and enlightening archival documents in the Archive of Security of Forces and the Literary Archive in Prague.

Janouch's biography is striking, reflecting the chaotic and tumultuous times in Central Europe in the first seven decades of the twentieth century. Born in Maribor in 1903 in what is now Slovenia and used to be part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Janouch moved to Prague at the age of three. Born to a Czech father and Slovenian mother, he bore the name of his mother's husband at the time; she later married Janouch's father, Gustav Kubasa, who became Kafka's colleague at the Workers' Insurance in Prague and who introduced Janouch to Kafka. Janouch claimed that they lived for a while in the Galizian town Przemysl and that his mother knew Yiddish. (Čermák 2005, 143) But it does not seem plausible that Janouch was Jewish. Janouch attended a German *Gymnasium* in Prague and he wrote poetry in German as a young man. He was bilingual, although they spoke Czech at home.

No scholarly biography of Janouch exists. Čermák offered a sketch of Janouch's life. Because he does not clearly refer to his sources, and because of the sensitivity of the material, I decided to outline Janouch's life mostly based on the new sources I found in the archive; only at a several occasions, I refer to Čermák's account of Janouch's life.

Janouch's secret police file records that he applied to become a member of the pro-Nazi organization *Vlajka* (The Flag) in July 1939, but was later dismissed for failing to pay the members' fees. For some time during the war, he was employed as a musician by the Trade Unions (NOUZ), on behalf of which he travelled and performed in Germany. Kafka described

Janouch to Milena Jesenská in one of his letters as primarily a musician: "Hauptsächlich aber ist er Musiker." (1954, 157) Janouch earned his living as a pianist in night clubs and as an author of jazz textbooks from the 1920s throughout the Second World War. In 1944, he published the article "Magie jazzu" (The Magic of Jazz), in a journal issued by the Trades Union[59], which employed Janouch during the war and on behalf of which he performed in Germany. While a paragraph of the article was later used to illustrate the pioneering era of Czech jazz (e.g. in *Kronika české synkopy*), other sections that were reprinted in other journals[60] served as evidence for Janouch's pro-German attitudes. These alleged collaborationist tendencies formed a significant part in accusations raised against Janouch in January 1946. "The Magic of Jazz" is a rhetorical hodge-podge both in style and content; political jargon is mixed with musical references, disdain of jazz with admiration for it. In a section later used by the Military Defence Intelligence Agency State Security (OBZ) to attempt to incriminate Janouch, it offers a pro-German analysis of Europe's interwar situation:

> the World War 1914-1918 ended with the Versaille dictate, which made Germany, chained by betrayal, along with the entire European continent, accessible to the economic and cultural invasion of the Anglo-American part of the world. (…) Germany and all of Europe were unmercifully plundered.[61]

Janouch's enthusiasm for jazz is peculiarly understated for a young jazz musician and an author of several dozen music textbooks, an author who has earned an entry in the Jazz Encyclopedia[62] as well the sympathy of the Czech writer and jazz enthusiast Josef Škvorecký (1983). In his

[59] „List soukromých zaměstnanců svobodných povolání, Praha, Národní odborová ústředna zaměstnanecká," 1942-1944.
[60] E.g. „Večer", March 13th, 1944.
[61] My translation.
[62] Matzner, Poledňák, Wasserberger et al, *Encyklopedie jazzu a moderní populární hudby.* Praha, Editio Supraphon, 1990.

article, nevertheless, Janouch characterizes jazz by formulations such as: "jazz was profitable, and therefore it grew with the speed of an insidious eczema," typical of the dismissal of jazz by the Nazis. Jazz was a "spasm, sound delirium of hunger and thirst of heart and nerves," "unbridled animalistic sound;" it addressed the "most primitive human instincts." Still, especially towards the end of the article, which contrasts with the less sympathetic view of jazz voiced before, Janouch praises Czech jazz for ceasing to imitate foreign models and striving to achieve free creation, art. Janouch perhaps paid lip service to the Nazi censorship, rather than expressed his own opinions, but as Škvorecký judged, he tried to please the Nazi censor more than was customary or necessary in contemporary publications about jazz.[63] Janouch may have held some genuine sympathies toward Germany, or his overzealous attitude may have aimed to counter some potential accusations that could have been raised against him. He may have wanted to continue playing jazz and write about it, although the style was not favoured by the Nazis. Or his insecurity may have stemmed from the fact that he was a deserter from the Yugoslav army, and in possession of no personal documents until 1943, as his file in the Secret Police records indicates.[64]

In the immediate aftermath of the war, Janouch became both the subject of Secret Police monitoring and an agent informing for it. The archive contains Janouch's reports from Karlovy Vary (Carlsbad) in the fall of 1945; other files repeatedly raise the question for whom did he actually work. In any case, for sure, he was active in Karlovy Vary in the fall of 1945, although it is not clear on whose behalf. In a letter from Karlovy Vary dated November 6th, addressed to Dr.

[63] In my correspondence with Josef Škvorecký February 28, 2008. Škvorecký wrote: „The article reveals two things: on the one hand, lack of knoweldge of jazz history, on the other an attempt to make jazz acceptable for surveillance, through political compromises (...) which, to my mind, exceed the necessity."
[64] Janouch's file in the Ministry of Security Forces Archive, Prague. 305-657-1

Váš or Váša[65] at the Headquarters of the Military Defence Intelligence Agency (OBZ), Ministry of Defence, in Prague, Janouch requested gasoline and money: "now I only need some new Czech money, cigarettes to bribe Germans for issuing food and personal certificates, and the whole service can work as oiled." Without having further information about the context of Janouch's activities or "services", it is impossible to surmise what he was involved with, whom he needed to bribe and for what purpose. Janouch's letters/reports, addressed to Dr. Váš (Váša) were signed sometimes Gustav Janouch, sometimes by his alias, Svěrák; they describe the local conditions for whatever he was involved in:

> (…) conditions for intelligence work are very troublesome. Travel and sleep are almost impossible. People sleep in stables, in train stations and passageways. Every report is paid off by the sacrifice of the most primitive personal comfort, and in addition to it, Americans on the border now shoot without warning. Therefore it is necessary that in relation to my people, I keep my word. I can accomplish that only with your help. Send me the gasoline. (KV, October 30th, 1945)[66]

The Military Defence Intelligence Agency (Vojenské obranné zpravodajství, OBZ) was one of four Czechoslovak post-war security agencies. All four were under the control of the Communist Party (Lukeš 2007, 3-28). Although Czechoslovakia was still (until February 1948) an independent and democratic country, the Ministry of Interior and State Security was under the control of the Communists since the elections in May 1946. OBZ was established in January 1945, "ostensibly to serve the needs of Czechoslovak Army troops who were deployed on the Eastern front." (Ibid, 6) In reality, it served as a tool for the Sovietization of the armed forces. "The OBZ continued after the war as a military counterintelligence service. According to its

[65] Janouch indicates the name in dative and with an accent above "a." The nominative form could be either Váš or Váša. From another file, though, we learn that Janouch worked for Dr. Vaš, so it is likely that also Janouch's reports were addressed to Dr. Vaš.
[66] All translations from the files are mine.

charter, it was supposed to protect the armed forces, uncover the remnants of Nazi organizations, and protect military-industrial plants against foreign intelligence. In reality, the OBZ's main role prior to the Communist seizure of power was to promote the interest of the KSČ." (Ibid, 7) The agency became notorious for its cruelties in the early 1950s.

During the same fall of 1945, Janouch became a subject of an investigation conducted by OBZ (apparently by a different branch of the same agency that Janouch worked for). A section of the OBZ launched an investigation of Janouch's activities during the war and its aftermath. From a report of December 27th, 1945, we learn that Janouch attempted to defend himself against allegations raised against him. The report claims that he works for the Secret Police (StB) and that he claims to have worked for Dr. Vaš. Dr. Karel Vaš was one of the notorious two leaders of OBZ, chosen by Soviet officials.[67]

The report inquires how Janouch learned about the investigation filed against him: "Janouch perfectly understands the organization of OBZ. It remains inexplicable how he found out that our division investigates his case. (…) Janouch makes an impression of a sly chap." In a number of reports, the OBZ investigators question on whose behalf Janouch operated in Karlovy Vary and whether he received assignments from the secret police. Janouch applied to join the state police, but it is not clear whether he was admitted; some files seem to confirm it. This may all reflect both the state of confusion in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War and the multiplicity of internal security branches that compete not just against each other, but also within each, as different branches are semi-independent of each other. This situation is typical of

[67] The second one, Bedřich Reicin, was tried in the Slánský trial and executed in December 1952.

autocratic regimes when the rules are afraid of their own security forces and attempt to rule them by dividing them against each other and increase enmities and competition between them. Janouch may have also attempted to play all sides against each other in 1945.

It is certain that in January 1946 Janouch was arrested and accused, along with two other men, of extortion, bribery, restraint of personal freedom (kidnapping), collaboration, and killing a Red Army officer. The prosecution notification (trestní oznámení) of State Security addressed to the District Court in Karlovy Vary from February 6th, 1946, provides a detailed, ten-page-long list of accusations, starting with Janouch's pro-German sympathies during the war, his actions during the May 1945 revolution in Prague and in the six months that followed, mostly in the fall when Janouch was active in Karlovy Vary.[68] The first sentence states: "The Ministry of Interior was from many sides alerted to Gustav Janouch, who pretended to be a high police officer and even a personal friend of the Interior Minister, but is in fact a *Hochstapler* and was a collaborator during the occupation." (The italics are mine.)

This report details how Janouch's neighbors testified against him, but changed their testimony after Janouch, as a commander of the revolutionary movement *Rudá pěst* (The Red Fist), pressed the witnesses at the point of a gun. According to some witnesses, Janouch joined the revolutionary group *Pěst* during the Prague uprising in May 1945, but rather than performing heroic feats, as he later claimed, was stricken by panic and hid in a cellar. He nevertheless quickly became a leader of *Pěst* and directed its dubious activities in the northern Bohemian town Most (Brüx). *Pěst* was known to commit crimes against the German population after the war. After it disbanded in July 1945, most of its members applied to become members of the

[68] File 305-657-1

National Security Corps (Sbor národní bezpečnosti). In the fall of 1945, Janouch served on the County Commission of National Security (KVNB, Krajský výbor národní bezpečnosti). When it dissolved, he applied to join the ZOB, but was rejected. Janouch – the report says- continued to act as if he was head of the local political police, arrested people, led interrogations and conducted house searches, although he had no authority to do so. The report details how he extorted Germans, who feared the loss of their property, taking bribes in exchange for the promise of protecting them, and for issuing passports. Janouch was conditionally released from custody in February 1947 after a year in jail. A final verdict of acquittal was passed only on March 13th 1948, a month after the Communist takeover.

Not much is known about Janouch in the 1950s. Čermák indicates that Janouch worked for the secret police from 1951 to 1954. (Čermák 2005, 159) I did not find any evidence to corroborate this claim and as I noted above, it is impossible to trace Čermák's sources.

Janouch published several books in the 1950s and 1960s, mostly in German: in addition to the two editions of *Gespräche mit Kafka*, *Prager Begegnungen* (Paul List Verlag, Leipzig, 1959), *Heckmeck. Prager Nachtstücke* (Henssel Verlag, Berlin, 1968), a biography of the writer Jaroslav Hašek, *Jaroslav Hašek, Der Vater des braven Soldaten Schwejk*, (Francke-Verlag, Bern &. Munich, 1965) and another book on Kafka, *Kafka und seine Welt* (Vienna, 1965). His book on jazz, *Der Todesblues*, remained unpublished. Janouch published in Czech only translations and an anthology: his translation of the first Czech edition of the *Diary of Anne Frank* and *Písně rudého praporu* (The Songs of Red Flag), a collection of revolutionary songs. Intriguingly, Čermák writes that Janouch wrote a story called "Plagiarism" in the 1950s, but failed to publish

it. Again, the absence of footnoted sources in Čermák's book makes it impossible to check his claims and reach one's own conclusions.

It is surprising that a Czechoslovak citizen would be able to publish in the West, and carry uninterrupted correspondence with his Western partners in the Stalinist early 1950s. It is even more striking in the case of the commercially successful *Conversations*, since Kafka was proscribed in Czechoslovakia and his writings could not be published officially from 1948 to 1956. It is hard to imagine that Janouch would not encounter any obstacles and repercussions, but would continue publishing abroad about Kafka and enjoy the royalties. Janouch was able to correspond with Max Brod in Israel, in the context of the early 1950s' rabid and paranoid state anti-Semitism in Communist Czechoslovakia. Another set of questions concerns royalties for his books published in the West; the successful *Conversations* were translated into a number of languages. Curiously, the Secret Police files do not contain any material related to this period of Janouch's activities. Putting all of the above together: his acquittal in a judicial system where arrest equalled conviction, his apparently free ability to correspond about Kafka with Zionist émigrés, his ability to publish abroad, and the implausible absence of as much as a mention in the secret police files, implies with a very high likelihood that somebody powerful was protecting him. The most likely explanation is that he was working in some capacity for the secret police. Otherwise, Janouch would have had to be at once very lucky (to be acquitted after a year in jail), naive (to carry on correspondences about Kafka in the mail with Zionist émigrés in Israel and publishers in the West), and invisible (to remain under the radar of the secret police during all these activities).

When considering the findings at the Archive of Security Forces, we must keep in mind the following question: How credible are the investigations and accusations of a security organization directed by the Soviets and later to became synonymous with Stalinist terror? What chance had an individual to a fair investigation and trial under the shaky conditions of the post war justice system? The files give us nevertheless a good and chilling insight into those years of insecurity in which, Janouch's passed between the late 1920s and the time when he remembered Kafka:

> Es kamen dann lange Jahre unruhigen Wanderns über mich, welche in das Elend des Zweiten Weltkrieges und die Verwirrung und Unruhe der Gegenwart mündeten. Ich erlebte tödliche Angst, Verfolgung und Kerkerung, tierischen Hunger, Schmutz und Kälte, dumme amtliche Roheit, das Chaos als Prinzip einer scheinbar verständig organisierten Welt (…) (Janouch, Gespräche I)

Janouch wrote these words in his Preface to *Conversations* in June 1947 in Prague, after his release from prison. By a short cut, he sums up the preceding two decades. He constructs a moment that led him to remembering the idol of his youth, Franz Kafka.

> Ich erinnere mich daran, wie er mir einmal sagte: "Es müssen oft sehr lange Jahre vergehen, ehe das Ohr für eine bestimmte Geschichte reif wird. Die Menschen aber müssen (…) sterben, damit wir sie richtig begreifen."

Janouch's first readers, Max Brod and the West German audience, could have known nothing of Janouch's tumultuous life in the preceding years. As if nothing had happened between Kafka's death in 1924 and Janouch's recollection of him in 1947; Janouch's life and the political and social upheavals retreat into the distance.

Army deserter, poet, composer and bar pianist, secret police informer, Nazi sympathizer, police officer, adventurer, revolutionary, impostor, Kafka's friend, Hašek's biographer, translator, world-famous author and forger – are some of the identities that Janouch assumed during his life, or were ascribed to him. The few existing biographical sketches, with all their contradictions, and the evidence contained in archives, attest to life worthy of a character from a Baroque novel, a prankster in a picaresque narrative, a *pícaro* without a master and the redeeming humour. Or was Kafka the master that Janouch was searching for or tried to construct in his *Conversations*? This circumstance makes it even more intriguing when addressing the issues of truth and fabrications in *Conversations*.

III. Forgery, Hoax, Fabrication?

Binder values *Conversations* and the information that it provides for their depiction of atmosphere and background to Kafka's everyday life. Janouch's book is among the very few existing sources that capture Kafka as a concrete human being, as a speaker, that describes his gestures and behaviour at work:

> Der Wert der kritisch geprüften Kafka-Erinnerungen Janouchs liegt demnach einmal im Atmosphärischen, in der Konkretion, in der Kafka als Mensch, als Redender, Gestikulierender und Handelnder in seiner beruflichen Umgebung erscheint. (Binder 1979, 561)

Conversations provide a unique insight into Kafka as a speaker:

> Zum andern aber sind die Aussagen selbst (…) fast die einzigen Zeugnisse dieser Art, die sich erhalten haben, also eine besonders wichtige, wenn auch trübe Quelle für seine Sprechweise in mündlichen Verkehr.

The problem, of course, is that we cannot be sure that the words that Janouch transmits are indeed those of Kafka:

> Dies alles freilich nur unter der unsicheren Voraussetzung, dass Janouch wirkliche Gesprächsbeiträge Kafkas überliefert. (Ibid, 562)

Even Čermák does not dismiss *Conversations* in its entirety. In a more comprehensive and detailed analysis, Čermák praises Binder's attempt to distinguish truth from fabrications, and also provides insights into stylistic and psychological aspects of the text. Like Binder, Čermák argues that in addition to errors and fabrications, it contains some information contributing to our knowledge of Kafka's world, in those areas where Janouch "did not need to fabricate/invent, where he could utilize his real experiences meeting Kafka." (Čermák 2005, 84) Čermák lists the following valuable areas, which correspond to what Binder wrote earlier: "First of all much that had to do with Janouch's visits to Kafka in his office. When describing his visits and reproducing conversations, Janouch pays great attention to Kafka's physiognomy, gestures and speech, the appearance of a man sitting behind a table..." But Čermák immediately qualifies even this brief positive evaluation of Janouch's observation by suggesting that by all these descriptions, "it appears as if Janouch used them to substitute for temporal and factual circumstances, which he may have fabricated." (Čermák 2005, 84) Čermák accepts Janouch's descriptions of the insurance office and some of Kafka's colleagues as possibly genuine, although Janouch could have had gained this information second hand, from his father.

Čermák dismisses Janouch as a "fraud," for an intentional attempt to deceive. He calls Janouch's work a "far-reaching forgery," (Čermák 2005, 140) "suggestive forgeries," "artful

mystification." (Ibid, 66) He places *Conversations* in the broad category of "literary theft, plagiarism, forgeries, false legends and mystifications." (Ibid, 5) He brings wide-ranging examples for this long tradition: the forged fourth century apocryphal correspondence between Seneca and Saint Paul, the eighteenth-century Ossian and the nineteenth-century Czech manuscripts *Královédvorský* a *Zelenohorský*, exposed as forgeries by the philosopher and first Czechoslovak president T.G. Masaryk. The long tradition encompasses, as Čermák rather vaguely puts it, the "original" and "the forged or the imitated." (Ibid, 5) Such a vague category can subsume the impostor who penned the second volume of *Don Quijote* before Cervantes wrote his own, or imitations of popular novels, such as Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* and Goethe's *Werther*, or Prosper Merimée's literary hoaxes. These examples, obviously, present very diverse cases produced with different motivations, technical skills and methods, purpose, and justifications.

Grafton (1990) has developed illuminating analytical categories that distinguish what Čermák conflates in a fierce attempt to discredit Janouch. According to Anthony Grafton, the history of forgers and forgeries coexists alongside the history of textual criticism: one develops and thrives alongside the other. (Grafton 1990, 8) Forgers devise new ways of deceiving their audiences, benefiting from the technical skills developed by textual critics. The critics refine their methods by exposing frauds and distinguishing fake from authentic sources. A literary forgery occurs, "when someone deliberately tries to pass off a piece of writing as being by someone else, or as something else." (Cuddon et al 2000, 327) Forgery is distinguished from a hoax by its intention: While "a forger has a serious intention to deceive and maintain a deception," a hoaxer "has a more light-hearted approach, regards the deception as a joke and,

> sooner or later, 'comes clean.'" (Cuddon et al 2000, 469) Grafton adds other qualifying markers: all textual forgeries pretend to be texts from the past, written by someone other than their real author. The forger must give his text "the linguistic appearance as a text and the physical appearance as a document – of something from a period dramatically earlier than and different from his own." (Grafton 1990, 50)

Conversations partly fit within the category of literary forgery; it does not conform to the definition of a hoax (Čermák uses interchangeably the terms forgery and mystification, *mystifikace*, the meaning of which, in Czech, is close to hoax). It conforms to forgery as Grafton describes it in passing itself off as what it purports to be but is not: a document. First, it purports to bear testimony to encounters and conversations between Janouch and Kafka, and as much as *Conversations* bear kernels of truth, they also contain fabrications. Second, it purports to record Kafka's words by marking them with quotation marks. But Janouch's text also misses some of Grafton's defining characteristics of a forgery: Janouch did not manufacture an authentic-looking document containing Kafka's writings, a manuscript or a typescript, that Janouch could pass as found in his possessions. Most significantly, Janouch does not present a "found text" but gives the reader a fictional account of his encounters with Kafka. Janouch claims that Kafka produced the words that Janouch offers to us, and he distances himself as an author from the text that follows the Preface. He gives us Kafka's words, in quotation marks, and it is up to the gullibility or skepticism of the reader to decide how to approach them. Classical forgeries do not publicize the real author, but attribute the text to someone long dead. It is this very temporal distance that grants the forged text its value. Macpherson's Ossianic forgeries (1760, 1762, and 1765) allegedly originated from the third century. The nineteenth-century Czech manuscripts, produced by Václav Hanka in 1817

and 1818, were ascribed to the ninth, tenth, and thirteenth centuries respectively. They purported to be a testimony to Czech literary production long before the oldest extant historical texts. Temporal distance is also important for Janouch's texts. A quarter century passed between Janouch's encounters with Kafka and the writing of *Conversations* in 1947. The most trusting reader of Janouch knows that the words are Janouch's and that at their best; they hopefully preserve something of Kafka. To persuade his readers of the authenticity of his text, Janouch claims to have based his book on sources such as his contemporary diaries and a manuscript he produced a few years after Kafka's death, but the existence of these intermediary materials is questionable. The considerable time that had elapsed between the encounters with Kafka and the production of *Conversations* signals the unreliability of the text. The reader must consider the changes Kafka's words must have undergone even if the particular encounter took place to begin with; first, when Janouch recorded them at some later point in his diaries (whether or not this process took place), and second how were they transformed in the process of writing in Janouch's later manuscript.

Binder sketches out how Janouch might have constructed some of the entries, based on various secondary materials, in both editions, and concludes:

> So scheint der Schluß gerechtfertigt, die Erweiterungen der Fassung von 1968 seien, mindestens größerenteils, Phantastereien oder gar Fälschungen. Freilich beweisen die Ungereimtheiten, Sachfehler und die Art und Weise, wie Janouch mit den überkommenen Dokumenten umging (…) dass er raffinierter Erfindungen und konstruktiver Neuerschöpfungen nicht fähig war. (Binder 1979, 559)

Rather than an ingenious forgery, as Binder and Čermák argue, Janouch's compositions are pastiche, an imitation of Kafka's words, and a collage of memory fragments and various elements of Kafka's life, found in secondary sources, reconstituted in a new mosaic, pieces lifted

from various contexts and set in a new narrative frame. *Conversations* is a complex text, a fiction to some degree, a memoir that contains fabrications, and one that uses various classical literary/novelistic conceits. Like forgery, it pretends to be a found text from a different era, by an author who is no longer alive., but it would not be correct to consider *Conversations* a literary hoax. Fooling the audience for the sake of a joke, a prank, laughter, and readiness to eventually admit the truth certainly does not conform to what we know about Janouch and the reception of his book. *Conversations* is not a joke, although when reading it today, some of the situations described, such as the two interlocutors holding each other under their arms while Kafka chatters about various Prague landmarks, do seem somewhat far-fetched to say the least.

Janouch published in German a biography of Kafka's contemporary, the Czech writer Jaroslav Hašek, whose various hoaxes are well documented and became part both of his biography and his oeuvre. Some of his biographers inappropriately blurred the boundaries between the two. This is also what Janouch's biography of Hašek has been faulted with.[69] Hašek's most elaborate and literary hoax was his mock political party, "The Political Party of Moderate Progress within the Bounds of Law," the history of which then Hašek "recorded" in a very humorous book.[70] Janouch resembles Hašek in one other curious matter: Hašek's extraordinary life took him to Russia where he became a red commissar. For a brief moment of

[69] Janouch's book received mixed reviews. One reviewer (Procházka 1968) faulted Janouch with „uncritical attitude toward his material," and for reaching „all kinds of far-fetched conclusions about the writers' thoughts and attitudes." Unlike older memoirs about Hasek, Janouch however documented his sources – a number of people who remembered Hasek and who Janouch interviewed. The reviewer concluded that Janouch did not choose to write an authoritative biography, but was able to „bring out the colorfulness of Hasek's personality."

[70] One of the legends surrounding Kafka has it that Kafka and Hašek met. The journalist and anarchist Michal Mareš claimed that he invited Kafka to one of the Party's meeting in 1911, and introduced Kafka to Hašek, who was scheduled to hold a speech on the theme of "Elections to the Austrian Parliament in Vienna, political situation, alcoholism, Darwinism, prostitution and the Bulgarian king." Michal Mareš, *Ze vzpomínek anarchisty, reportéra a válečného zločince*. Praha: Prostor, 1999. 84. (Memories of an Anarchist, Reporter and a War Criminal.)

his life, Janouch was a fervent revolutionary and a police commissar (or at least he impersonated a commissar without having any legitimacy to act as one) in the aftermath of the war. Janouch blurred the distinction between critical biography and myths in his account of Hašek's life. It seems that he worked in a similar manner when writing his *Conversations*, blending, in an appealing way, elements from his life with his memories of Kafka.

Goldstücker and Čermák argue that *Conversations* intentionally confirmed the religious image of Kafka created by Max Brod, the first reader and a guarantor of the subsequent positive reception.[71] Janouch chose to send the text abroad rather than try to publish it in Czechoslovakia, where in May 1947,[72] eight months before the Communist coup *d'état*, a publication of a book about Kafka would certainly have been politically feasible. The few years between the end of the war and the Communist coup were in fact among the very few periods favourable towards Kafka. Publication of Kafka's collected works in eight volumes was planned (and partially executed) under the auspices of Brod. "Kafka and Prague," a collection of essays by the Czech *Germanisten* Hugo Siebenschein, Peter Demetz, Emil Utitz, and the Scottish translator Edwin Muir came out in

---

[71] Brod creates this image of Kafka also in his novel, *Zauberreich der Liebe* (1926), in which he depicts Kafka in the figure of Garta. The novel is discussed by Milan Kundera. Kafka's religious attitudes derive from his aphorisms as well as his letters and his way of life. Kundera points out the hierarchy of Brod's interpretation of Kafka: on top, there is Kafka's life, an example to follow; in the middle, -- aphorisms, ‚philosophical," thought-related passages in his diaries; all the way on the bottom – Kafka's narrative work." (Kundera 2006, 14)

[72] Janouch indicates that the manuscript was sent to Brod in Tel Aviv in May 1947, and Brod replied in Christmas 1949. Janouch's own Preface is dated June 1947. Waltraud John, in her thesis on Janouch, corrects, on the basis of correspondence between Brod and Janouch, this date, and indicates that the manuscript was sent to Brod in 1949. (Kusak 2003, 83) That would of course pose a major diference in regards to Janouch's options of publication in Czechoslovakia: after 1948, there would be no chance for publishing a book on Kafka. There are two possibilities: Janouch's date in the Preface is correct (1947), but it took him another two years to send the manuscript to Brod. (This scenario seems to be confirmed by Brod: Brod indicates May 1947 as the date when he received a letter from Janouch asking him whether he can send the manuscript, and adds that the manuscript arrived „mit großer Verspätung". Brod 1991, 188) The second possibility is that the date in the Preface is incorrect and Janouch prepared the manuscript in 1949, which however contradicts his own claim that he worked on it after his release from prison (1947).

1947 in Prague. Janouch apparently never attempted to publish *Gespräche* in Czech, although he later allegedly tried to publish other texts in the language that he knew as well as German. (Čermák 2005, 160)

Conversations contain some signals that clearly give away its unreliability and highlight its complex fabric of reality and fiction, of memory and imagination. I will focus on Janouch's prefaces from both editions. Authors' prefaces and introductions generally instruct us how to read the text that follows. This function is of a special significance in a book that is generically as complex as Janouch's *Conversations*; a text that purports to bear testimony (and has been read as such). Janouch uses several strategies to persuade the reader of the authenticity of his text. Both prefaces ("Vorbemerkung" in 1951 and "Die Geschichte dieses Buches" in 1968) contain a construction of the text's genesis and statements about the author-narrator's attitude towards the subject of his testimony, Franz Kafka.

The two prefaces differ substantially. The "Vorbemerkung" from the first edition, dated June 1947, is very brief. In the first sentence, Janouch notes that he got to know the writer Franz Kafka in 1920. He then states that in 1926 he participated "as an advisor" in the Czech edition of "Die Verwandlung" by the Moravian Catholic publisher Josef Florian. Janouch claims that he translated six stories from the collection *Der Landarzt* (Čermák indicates that there is no evidence for this claim, 2005 63); merely one of them, "Ein Traum," was published under the pseudonym Axel Janouch in 1929 in the cycle of original etchings by the German painter Otto Coester. Josef Florian then allegedly entreated Janouch to edit his diary entries about Kafka, which he would publish in Czech. Janouch transcribed the relevant places from his various note books, and gave the manuscript to Florian.

> Ich schrieb also die in Betracht kommenden Tagebuchstellen aus den verschiedenen Heften auf einzelne Blätter, deren tschechische Reinschrift ich Josef Florian übergab. (Janouch I, 7)

Janouch's notes were however not published. Janouch explains the long gap between the production of the manuscript and 1947, when he sent it to Brod. He sets his decision, twenty year later, to publish his manuscript against the background of the miserable conditions, personal and historic: the Second World War, fear, persecution, incarceration, hunger, and cold; in Janouch's view, Kafka's fictional world became his own. He switches into the present tense and recalls what Kafka "once told him" (Janouch's original title of his book was "Kafka sagte mir"):

> Es müssen oft sehr lange Jahre vergehen, ehe das Ohr für eine bestimmte Geschichte reif wird. Die Menschen aber müssen – so wie unsere Eltern und überhaupt alles, was wir lieben und fürchten – sterben, damit wir sie richtig begreifen. (Ibid, 8)

Janouch explains why it took him so long to return to the person that meant so much to him in his youth. He remembers the manuscript that he once gave to Florian. The manuscript is lost, but he finds its "Czech-German and German-Czech draft." He wants to edit his text that is now more than two decades old; decides not to interfere with what he once wrote, and has the text published in its alleged 1920s version.

The second edition of *Gespräche* (1968) is more than one third longer than its predecessor. It includes an extensive Preface: the "Vorbemerkung" becomes "Die Geschichte dieses Buches." Janouch notes the success of the first edition among literary scholars as well as a more popular audience; the book has been translated into many languages, including French,

Italian, Swedish, English, and Japanese. Janouch's "anspruchloses Buch," was received as „ein ernst bewertetes literarisches Forschungsdokument."

Janouch distinguishes between a „literary work", „document", and „testimony"; he did not write a literary work, but a document. It is important for him to emphasize the documentary status of his text, which is of a special significance to him; his text's value lies precisely in its documentary, authentic nature. He quotes from his (1947) letter to Brod:

> Ich betrachte mein Buch über Franz Kafka nicht als literarisches Werk, sondern als ein Dokument: es ist nichts als eine Zeugenaussage und Abrechnung mit dem Klima meiner Jugend (…)" (Janouch 1968, 16)

The text is presented as a testimony, and its first person narrator as a witness. By insisting on the status of witness and on the documentary nature of the text, Janouch seeks to establish the book's credibility. He presses the point that Kafka was more important to him as a human being than a writer. He does not read Kafka's books:

> Ich kann die Romane und Tagebücher des Dichters Franz Kafka nicht lesen. Nicht weil er mir fremd, sondern weil er mir allzu nahe ist. (…) Er war und ist für mich keine Literaturerscheinung. Er ist für mich viel mehr. Doktor Franz Kafka ist für mich wie vor Jahren noch immer die schützende Hülle meines ureigenen menschlichen Wesens. Er ist der Mensch, der durch seine Güte, Nachsicht und posenlose Wahrhaftigkeit die frostumwehte Entfaltung meines Ich förderte und behütete. Er ist der Erkenntnis- und Gefühlsgrund, auf dem ich noch heute in der gespenstischen Flut dieser Zeit dastehe. (Ibid)

Kafka was, to Janouch, a moral authority, a paragon, a pre-condition of his own existence. Janouch notes that Kafka still continues to fulfil this role, which in light of what we know about Janouch's life at the time, seems strikingly incongruous: Janouch's construed sanctity of the Kafka figure, clashes with the brutality characterizing Janouch's life in the years preceding *Conversations*.

Janouch distinguishes between Kafka the writer and Kafka the person, and professes his alliance with the person. He admits to having read only a handful of Kafka's texts: „Die Verwandlung", „Das Urteil," *Der Landarzt*, „In der Strafkolonie," and *Briefe an Milena*; he did not read Kafka's novels. Kafka the person is to Janouch much more than his books, more than a literary phenomenon. Janouch confesses his admiration for Kafka, who constitutes "das wichtigste Grunderlebnis meiner Jugend" (Janouch 1968, 11); his writing was, and remained, of secondary importance:

> Der lebendige Doktor Franz Kafka, den ich kannte, war viel größer als seine Bücher, die sein Freund Doktor Max Brod vor der Vernichtung rettete. Doktor Franz Kafka, den ich besuchte und bei seinen Spaziergängen durch Prag begleiten durfte, war so groß und in sich selbst fest gefügt, dass ich mich noch heute bei jeder scharfen Krümmung meines Lebensweges in der Erinnerung an seinen Schatten wie an einem solid geschmiedeten Eisengeländer festhalten kann. (…) Was sind da für mich Franz Kafkas Bücher?

Janouch draws a line between writing and life, between author and his writing. He places life above literature, document above fiction. Janouch's own vita, his references to "lange Jahre unruhigen Wanderns," as well as the fragmented picture that the archival documents reveal, strikingly differ from that of his role model. Through *Conversations*, Janouch perhaps tried to reduce the gap between the insecurity of his own life and the calm, wisdom and moderation that he imbued with his construction of Kafka.

Janouch fears that reading would corrupt his image of Kafka; it would contradict his anxiously safeguarded impressions and memories:

> Das Lesen seiner Bücher widerstrebt allen meinen sorgsam gehüteten und immer noch wachen Eindrücken und Erinnerungen aus der Zeit, da ich von

> Doktor Franz Kafka und von dem, was er mir sagte, ganz erfüllt und bezaubert war (…) (Ibid, 9)

Kafka made a lasting impression on Janouch, one he wishes to maintain intact, undisturbed by new impressions that would come from reading his works. This is understandable. Yet why would he need to emphasize the need to preserve his clear memories of Kafka, and resist reading his friend's texts if he relies on the authority of his contemporary diaries?

The second edition of *Conversations* offers a more elaborate version of the genesis of the text than the 1951 "Vorbemerkung," yet it is precisely here that striking contradictions occur. The original source is Janouch's diaries (as he claimed also in 1947), in which he attempted to fixate Kafka's utterances. „Dabei hielt ich in erster Linie seine Aussprüche fest." (Ibid, 11) The circumstances of their conversations were only sketched out („spärlich und flüchtig angedeutet"). Janouch introduces an additional source, "ein dickes graues Heft", (Ibid, 12) which he calls "Gedankenlager," and which he did not mention in the first edition.

> Hier deponierte ich im bunten Durcheinander Zitate, Gedichte, kleine Zeitungsausschnitte, literarische Pläne und Einfälle, Anekdoten, kurze Geschichten, Dinge, die mir einfielen, neben denen, die ich von verschiedenen Menschen hörte, also vor allem auch Kafkas Aussprüche über die verschiedensten Dinge und Begebenheiten. Sie konnten – aus dem ‚Gedankenlager' herausgehoben – eine ansehnliche Sammlung überraschender Aphorismen bilden. (Ibid, 12)

Janouch admits that his „Gedankenlager" contained a hodgepodge of various quotations, but without assigned authorship:

> Mein ‚Gedankenlager' war (…) nur ein Sammelsurium abrupt und formlos niedergeschriebener Lese- und Konversationssplitter, über deren nähere Entstehungsumstände ich wahrscheinlich nur im Augenblick ihrer Niederschrift genau Bescheiden wusste. (Ibid, 12)

Janouch cannot guarantee that the utterances in "Gedankenlager" were those of Kafka, rather than originating elsewhere. The diaries, on the other hand, contain Kafka's "utterances," but without noting any context. Eduard Goldstücker pointed how, in fact, Janouch provides two disclaimers: "Neither the truthfulness of the depicted circumstances nor the authorship of the individual utterances is guaranteed." (Goldstücker 1983, 54) Goldstücker conflates here the information that Janouch offered about the alleged diary, which was to preserve Kafka's utterances, and the Gedankenlager. Still, Janouch informs the reader that his own sources are not reliable, a warning that many readers chose to ignore.

The theme of Janouch as a witness runs throughout the 1968 Preface. Janouch insists on the documentary rather than fictional status of his writing. He often displaces the authority from himself onto his friends who reinforce this witness-status: "Du mußt die Gespräche herausgeben. Du bist Kafkas Zeuge, der vielleicht wichtige Schlüssel zu seinem inneren Wesen besitzt." (Janouch 1968, 14) Janouch often emphasizes the "authenticity" of his friends' entreaties by putting them in quotation marks. Georg and Jana Vachovec insist that the memory of Kafka does not belong to Janouch alone. (Ibid, 13) "Du bist Kafkas Zeuge, der vielleicht wichtige Schlüssel zu seinem inneren Wesen besitzt." (Ibid, 14) Even more significantly, Vachovec gives a voice to Janouch's aspirations to present his memories as a part of the writer's work: „Zwischen dem Justitiar Doktor Kafka und dem Dichter Franz Kafka ist keine trennende, schalldichte Betonwand. (..) Deine Gespräche gehören zu seinem Werk." (Ibid, 15)

In 1968, Janouch reconstructs the steps that led to the production and publication of his book. He found the "Aufzeichnungen" on the bottom of his cabinet; a friend typed them in three

copies and sent one to Max Brod. In Christmas 1949, Janouch receives a positive letter from Brod. In his reply (January 5, 1950), Janouch emphasized the documentary nature of his manuscript, quoted already above. Max Brod recognized his friend Kafka in Janouch's text, and assisted with the book's publication by Fischer Verlag in 1951. Upon seeing a copy, Janouch discovered to his amazement that a substantial part is missing. "Mein Buch war ein Torso, ein Krüppelorganismus…" (Ibid, 17).

> In dem Buch fehlte nämlich ein beträchtlicher Teil des ursprünglichen Textes, darunter nicht wenige Stellen, denen ich besonders großen Wert beimaß, denn sie zeigten das bisher verborgene Rebellengesicht (…), seinen konsequenten Antibürokratismus, sein Stöhnen und sporadisch auftretendes bitteres Verzweifeln in der Qualmfabrik seiner Kanzlei (…), den Sarkasmus, mit dem er die pseudosozialistischen Parteibonzen abtaxierte, seinen realen Blick für jede Art politischer Illusionen(…) (Ibid, 16)

Janouch insists that without the missing parts, Kafka's image is incomplete. These missing parts contain many sections in which Kafka's "rebellious" image as a sympathizer with socialism and anarchism is particularly developed.

Janouch is concerned that the incomplete edition should distort his testimony. "Ich war ein wichtiger Zeuge, der versagte." (Ibid, 19) More people entreat him to correct the image of Kafka. The Italian publicist Nerio Munizzo emphasizes his responsibility to present a complete and truthful image of Kafka:

> Sie sind der letzte in Prag noch lebende Mensch, der den Dichter Franz Kafka persönlich kannte. Sie müssen alles, was Sie über ihn wissen, sagen und weitergeben. Jedes Detail kann ein Schlüssel sein. Sie dürfen seine Persönlichkeit nicht durch ein Schweigen vernebeln." Similarly, Klaus Wagenbach pleaded with him: "Sie müssen alles, was Sie auf Kafkas Zeit wissen, aufschreiben. Es wird ja gar nicht mehr langsam dauern, und es wird niemand hier sein, der sich an jene Zeit erinnern können wird. (Ibid, 19)

Janouch has no way of reconstructing the missing pieces. He does not own a copy of his manuscript, his wife burned his diaries when he was in prison, and he has no clue where his "Gedankenlager" is. He admits that even had he found the "Gedankenlager," he could have hardly remembered the origin of the utterances. ("das Zustandekommen der verschiedenen Aussprüche"). After all those years, he could easily attribute to Kafka words that may have come from his reading:

> Es wäre nach all den langen Jahren ganz gut möglich gewesen, dass ich irgendwelche Eintragungen irrtümlicherweise Franz Kafka zuschreiben könnte, anstatt sie (…) als Zitate eines nun schon dem Gedächtnis entfallenen Lesestoffes zu deklarieren." (Ibid, 20)

Janouch alerts us that he could not reconstruct the missing dialogues with the help of "Gedankenlager," thus trying to convince us that he indeed found the missing pages, rather than reconstructed them.

Janouch suspects Brod of censoring the manuscript because it did not conform to his conservative concept of Kafka. This does not seem plausible, since Brod endorsed the manuscript in the first place. His further depictions are built up rhetorically, almost operatically, to achieve a strong effect: Janouch worries that he distorted Kafka's image, is desperate; his wife and daughter die, Janouch is destitute, his book *Der Todesblues* was suppressed in postwar Germany by Nazi sympathizers; Janouch is sick, poor, and dejected. Awaiting death, he visits his old, uninhabited apartment in the centre of Prague, where he finds, in a suitcase, the "Gedankenlager," as well as the "original of the missing pages of *Gespräche mit Kafka*." (Ibid,

24) Max Brod was not to blame after all. It was the typist who sent Brod an incomplete manuscript!

The second or "complete" edition includes altogether 44 additional sections with roughly 60 entries, which makes the book longer by a third. By comparing the two editions we can see that the parts that were missing in the first edition are scattered throughout the book; they do not comprise a coherent section that could easily have slipped off. It is hard to imagine that the "missing places" could be left out without affecting the composition of the other entries. None of the book's entries are fragments; it is hard to imagine that the missing parts would just smoothly fit in.

One of Janouch's letters archived in the library of the University of California, Berkeley, probably a supplement to a letter to Fischer Verlag, contains a sheet with instructions where to insert the "missing" pages. If Janouch's version of the story is true, a part of the manuscript fell out, and Janouch then decided to insert the "found pages" to the 1951 edition of the book according to their content. But it is also possible and contextually more plausible that Janouch wrote these additional pages, and instructed the publisher to insert them.[73]

Peter F. Neumeyer, at the time a graduate student at the University of Michigan, who corresponded with Janouch between 1962 and 1964, raised a number of valid points about the reliability of the additional sections in the 1968 edition. He questioned the plausibility of leaving out "random middle pages" rather than "self-contained group of pages," and questioned how it was possible that Brod would not notice the discontinuity of the text. Neumeyer sent a letter to

[73] Page from the correspondence with P.F. Neumeyer, archived at the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, titled: „Plan, nach dem die neu gefundenen Absätze in den alten Text eingegliedert werden."

Brod in 1963, to which Brod replied that he had "carried on a periodic and perfectly amiable correspondence with Gustav Janouch" between 1951 and 1962. (Neumeyer 1971) This contradicts Janouch's statement that he was surprised and dismayed when upon the receipt of the first edition of his book, he found that substantial parts were missing. Would he not have mentioned it in his letters to Brod?

Max Brod reports in his letter to Neumeyer that he found out about Janouch's accusations in the summer of 1962, in a letter from Rudolf Hirsch of Fischer Verlag, which also informed him that Janouch now found the missing pages. I quote here Brod's letter to Neumeyer almost in full:

> Ich habe erst im Sommer 1962 von dieser Sache erfahren. Da traf ich in Zürich Herrn Dr. Rudolf Hirsch, damals bereits im Begriff, den Verlag S. Fischer zu verlassen. Er erzählte mir, er habe von Janouch einen Brief erhalten, in dem dieser darlegt, er habe mich im Verdacht gehabt, dass ich Stellen aus seinem Buch gestrichen hätte, - jetzt aber habe er das Manuskript dieser Stellen gefunden und bitte mich um Entschuldigung dafür, dass er diesen falschen Verdacht und diese Missgefühle gegen mich gehegt habe. (…)
>
> Das Manuskript, das ich seinerzeit von Janouch erhalten und für das ich mich sehr kräftig bei S. Fischer und anderswärts eingesetzt hatte, machte auf mich nicht den Eindruck der Unvollständigkeit. Auch hat mir Janouch immer wieder (in langen Zeitabschnitten) freundlich geschrieben, so dass ich durch die Mitteilungen von Dr. Hirsch recht überrascht wurde."[74]

The information in the 1968 Preface, that Janouch rejected collaboration with Kindler Verlag in Munich, because he did not have relevant documents, implies that he did not have the pages in

[74] Quoted from a letter by Max Brod to Peter F. Neumeyer, March 12th, 1963. I thank Professor Neumeyer for allowing me to read this letter, as well as two letters by Janouch and two letters by Johannes Urzidil, addressed to Neumeyer.

May 1961. Binder (1979 557) reports that according to Janouch he found these missing pages in 1961 – probably on the basis of Janouch's statement. We may speculate when did Janouch find the "missing pages," or rather when did he manufacture the new conversations and what prompted him to do so. In this respect, Peter F. Neumeyer's information that he wrote to Janouch sometime in 1962 in connection to his interest in Kafka's reception of English literature, a topic of Neumeyer's (1963) dissertation, is of utmost relevance. In reply to his query, Janouch sent Neumeyer parts of the newly discovered manuscript, supplying the young scholar with further evidence of Kafka's interest in English authors, particularly Dickens and David Garnett. It is tempting to consider whether Janouch's imagination and ambition were stirred by Neumeyer's interest and he penned some new "conversations." Yet, it remains a speculation. Neumeyer concludes:

> The primary question, however, concerns the authenticity of the additions in the enlarged edition. My own feeling is that one would be advised to read the 'revised and enlarged' *Conversations with Kafka* with caution, especially when Kafka is quoted." (Neumeyer 1971, 556)

Although *Conversations* is not a forgery as we usually understand it, Janouch uses some classic tropes that forgers employ in order to create the impression of credibility and to appear to authenticate their forged texts. Grafton describes three methods of forged authentication:

1. Forgers provide archival pedigrees to their texts to demonstrate that their document is not an invention, but it was preserved in an inviolable archive.

> Since the ancient world, forgers had felt they had to explain how they could have come across stunning novelties previously unknown. They did so… by inventing mysterious but impressive origin stories. (Grafton 1990, 58)

How did they find this fascinating document, and how can it be that no one else found it before them? Janouch does not need to persuade his readers that he knew Kafka personally, but he does press the point that his manuscript is not a fiction, but rests on authentic sources. He explains that his manuscript was based on transcriptions of Kafka's utterances, noted in his diaries and in *Gedankenlager*. He returns repeatedly to his (to some degree contested) collaboration with Josef Florian to assert that the original manuscript was written in 1926-7, not too long after his encounters with Kafka. There is certainly no lack of "miraculous stories of surprise discovery" (Ibid, 58) in Janouch's accounts of the origins of the book, as for example the discovery of "lost" pages, unearthed, rather dramatically, as Janouch's role of a witness is endangered, as he envisions his own death; Janouch amplifies the gravity of the moment and the significance of Kafka to his own life, and the significance of his testimony to the world.

The second method of authentication, according to Grafton, lies in the "provision of a textual (as opposed to an archival) guarantee of authority – the provision, that is, of the name and vital circumstances of some past writer who stands as witness to the fraud" (Ibid, 58) Janouch creates a complex web of quotations, references, and self-references: to various authorities such as Josef Florian, Brod and Wagenbach, as well as to his other texts (such as the story "Die Feuerprobe"), which include references to some of the same episodes described in *Conversations*. Especially effective in this respect is his book *Kafka und seine Welt* (1965), in which Janouch quotes from his *Conversations*, thus affirming and promoting it as a reliable source.[75] Grafton also describes the practice of "displacement of authority from the forged text before us to a nonexistent earlier source from which it comes" and suggests that it resembles the

[75] Binder points out that some of the memories of Kafka, included in *Kafka und seine Welt*, were not in the first edition of *Gespräche mit Kafka*, but Janouch also "suppressed" them in the 1968 edition. (Binder 1979, 558-559)

methods of epistolary novels "with their substitution of an imaginary narrator and a later editor, working as it were in dialogue with one another, for a single author's narrative voice." (Grafton 1990, 59) I described earlier how Janouch utilizes this narrative convention: as in the aforementioned novels (and forgeries), the "imaginary narrator" and the "later editor" are identical.

Thirdly, the forger must create "an air of verisimilitude and significance." (Ibid, 62) "Noise, light, and publicity – accompanied by the references we have learned to expect to books that fall from the sky and leap from ditches -- normally accompany the birth of a grand fake." (Ibid, 65) Janouch's manuscript was greeted as an important discovery. Janouch did not hesitate to send his manuscript to the most revered authority, Max Brod, an act that facilitated the book's success.

The Genre of *Conversations*: Memoir or Fiction?

Neither Eckermann nor Janouch's *Gespräche* are records of dialogues (like the Platonic dialogues), but rather casual conversations with extensive sections describing the circumstances in which the conversations took place; Janouch provides cultural background as well as descriptions of Kafka's gestures. The interlocutors are clearly the gullible youth and the older, wise man, who patiently replies to the questions. In that sense, *Conversations* imitate hagiographic texts that also have roots in the oral tradition, but were transmitted to us in script. Legends and gospels, which sought to preserve the wisdom or laws embodied by ancient figures,

were also written down at a later date by a scribe who insisted on their truthfulness, most notably, the Gospels.

The subtitle "Erinnerungen und Aufzeichnungen" (Janouch 1968, 7) is more helpful in considering the book's genre than the term "document" that Janouch prefers and emphasizes in his Preface as well as in his letter to Brod. The subtitle indeed stands in a peculiar contrast to the rhetoric of the Preface. Writing memoirs is based on the work of memory, with all its typical shortcomings. Janouch offers a memoir of his own past, which is to some degree fabricated, and to some degree involves the same departures from the past as any other written recollection. The text contains some instances in which this work of memory – or forgetting - is clearly exhibited: "Ich erinnere mich nicht mehr daran, wie oft ich bei Franz Kafka in der Kanzlei war." (Ibid, 36) The temporal distance of a memoirist is apparent in the beginning of the following entry: "Unmittelbar nach dem ersten Weltkrieg war *Der Golem* von Gustav Meyrink der erfolgreichste deutsche Roman." (Ibid, 115) This is information given by someone who tries to reconstruct those past years by imparting some relevant information and insight into them, rather than by someone who writes immediately after the events.

Conversations is an amalgam of personal memories, cultural-historical references, and fiction. Janouch constructs his own biography via his memory of the real or the imaginary encounters with Kafka. The writing is joyous (in contrast to fabricators of traumatic past such as the well known case of Binyamin Wilkomirski). Janouch enjoys constructing the texture of his youthful readings and his literary, artistic, cinematic, philosophical, and religious interests, while coming to terms with some biographical milestones, such as his parents' divorce or the memory of his girlfriend at the time.

In his diary, Kafka wrote in 1912 about autobiography:

> In einer Selbstbiographie lässt es sich nicht vermeiden, dass sehr häufig dort wo ‚einmal' der Wahrheit gemäß gesetzt werden sollte, ‚öfters' gesetzt wird. Denn man bleibt sich immer bewusst, dass die Erinnerung aus dem Dunkel holt, das durch das Wort ‚einmal' zersprengt, durch das Wort ‚öfters' zwar auch nicht völlig geschont, aber wenigstens in der Ansicht des Schreibenden erhalten wird und ihn über Partien hinträgt, die vielleicht in seinem Leben sich gar nicht vorgefunden haben aber ihm einen Ersatz geben für jene, die er in seiner Erinnerung auch mit einer Ahnung nicht mehr berührt. (Kafka 2002a, 342)

Memory comes from darkness, of which the writer of autobiography never ceases being aware. He often substitutes the word "sometimes," where "once" would correspond to truth, creating from a unique event a commonplace, a repetition. "Once," would blow apart the darkness, and it is through the repetition, through "sometimes," that something of this obscurity remains intact. By using the adverb "sometimes," the writer of one's own life strives to keep this darkness intact; it helps to carry him over periods that perhaps never happened in his life, but substitute for those that he hardly ever touches in his memory. How much of the past does Janouch's writing bring to our attention? In many of his entries, Janouch builds the impression of unique past events, by specifying the particular occasion by mentioning what Kafka read at the moment, who they met, where they went, what happened before or after, though without concrete reference to a date. Despite all the detail, Janouch's entries remain strikingly vague; the conversations do not read as unique events.

Why view the *Conversations* as a document? The terminology used by Janouch's critics "falsification," "forgery," depends on Janouch's own claim for the documentary nature of his text. Perhaps the very assumption of *Conversations* as a document is flawed. Janouch's use of

the term document is at best figurative. Documents "provide information or evidence in shape of a record: diaries etc." (Cuddon et al, 2000, 233) *Conversations* are not a document. Even those entries that are based on a real encounter were formulated after the event, whether in the late 1920s or 1940s. But even had all the entries been based on Janouch's diaries and notes (if they existed), they must have been transformed in the process of writing so as to achieve their highly stylized form.

As genres evolve, so did our understanding of what is a document. Eckermann's *Gespräche mit Goethe* became a part of Goethe's oeuvre not only because Eckermann's method of recording their conversations is more reliable than Janouch's, but also because the requirements of document and testimony were different in Goethe's time than they are today.

In reference to the second edition of his *Conversations*, Janouch wrote that his "unanspruchsvolles Buch" was elevated to a document by readers, both lay and scholars. He accepts this general perception and adapts to these requirements. He does not legitimize the documentary status by his own intention, but transposes such evaluation onto others. Similarly, he claims that his friends rather than he himself insisted that the manuscript must be published, and that various literary scholars and other authorities insisted that Janouch corrects the impression of Kafka created by his "incomplete" *Conversations*.

Janouch's Prefaces are important parts of the text. Janouch became, so to say, his own editor, deciding what to present and how to present his book; he continued the game initiated by his readers. The real author, Janouch, is stated on the cover, as someone who composed the *Conversations*. In that respect, Janouch's role can be compared to that of a fictional editor (similar

to the fictional editor in Goethe's *Werther* or in E.T.A. Hoffmann's *Die Lebensansichten des Katers Murrs*), who crafts an Editor's Introduction or a Prologue in which he distances himself from the ensuing text's authorship, describing where and how he found the manuscript. Janouch uses some tropes typical of texts of fictional editors. But unlike the reader of the aforementioned novels who, to use Coleridge's term, performs a "willing suspension of disbelief," and accepts that what he will read next is a reality of another kind, a fictional reality, Janouch's ideal reader would be convinced that what he is about to receive is Kafka's authentic words, preserved by Janouch.

> A memoir, which we would naturally understand as having only limited access to the past, was given the status of a document by its editor, Janouch, like the anthology of personal memories edited by Hans-Gerd Koch and published in 1995 with the title *'Als Kafka mir entgegenkam'...Erinnerunngen an Franz Kafka*. Koch claims that the image of Kafka, which emerged from the delayed critical reception, differs from the image Kafka left in the minds of those who knew him. (Koch 1995, 7) Personal memory, writes Koch, can bring Kafka closer to us than historical and psychoanalytical studies and analyses, despite the risk that some of the memories contain just a kernel of truth. They are a choir of voices which contradict or complement each other. In the end, such image contributes to the "authentic image of Kafka." (Koch 1995, 8) Also in this anthology an editor ascribes memory a value of document.

Conclusion

It is not so striking that Janouch wrote a book that mixes memories and fiction. Nor is it surprising that he was deceitful about his intention, attempting to raise the manuscript's value by passing it off as a document, a testimony. It is more striking that so many scholars accepted Janouch's words as authentic. This is what prompted Janouch's critics to passionately expose *Conversations* as a fraud, or to engage in a hard and painstaking process of distinguishing *Dichtung* from *Wahrheit*.

It is however hard to see the book as a mere cold calculation, aimed solely at deception for personal profit, as Čermák has it. Such an attitude by itself would hardly have sustained the writing process. The prevailing tone of the book is that of admiration, the warm engagement with the subject is apparent on every page. Janouch did pay a tribute to Kafka, after all, whether or not it was based more on imagination than on memory. This point was also raised by Škvorecký, who was biased in favour of Janouch, the jazz musician:

> Poor Janouch. As an authentic source, his *magnum opus* is discredited today. It looks like the old swingman somewhat doctored up his memories, somewhat exaggerated. But does he deserve the almost mocking tone that Eduard Goldstücker used in his scathing analysis of *Conversations*? And do we have the moral right to condemn him for his attempt to use the acquaintance with the Maestro to earn some money? (...)
>
> Well, his book is to some extent – perhaps mainly – the fruit not of diary entries and Dickensian memory, but of imagination. But it is not a bad book. It is a loving tribute to the Master, who inspired many readers, scholars or not. But what about those who mistook the book for an accurate record and

> perhaps even built their hypotheses on claims put in Kafka's mouth probably by Janouch?[76] (Škvorecký 1983, 159-160)

Conversations was embraced as document first by its readers, then by Janouch. The book however became a document of a different sort: a testimony of interest in Kafka, of the desire to get closer to the writer as a person, a document to our reading and interpretation practices. Janouch professed his allegiance to Kafka the man rather than the writer and refused to read most of his works. He nevertheless committed his own memories to paper, calling them a document, distinguishing them from fiction. Unwittingly, he hinted at Kafka's much more ambiguous, passionate and contradictory attitude towards writing as the only possible form of life on the one hand, and writing as an alternative to life, on the other. (Neumann 1981, 154)

[76] My translation from Czech.

Chapter III

Kafka as a Secular Prophet? Eduard Goldstücker and the 1963 Conference in Liblice (*The Trial*)

Kafka's *Castle* was published in Czech in 1935; *The Trial* was published for the first time twenty-three years later, in 1958. *The Trial*, along with Kafka's short stories "In der Strafkolonie" and "Der Bau,"[77] were arguably the most influential of Kafka's works in Czechoslovakia. As I discuss in the chapter on Kafka in Samizdat, while the authorities permitted a reissue of Kafka's stories in 1983, *The Trial* was deemed too problematic to be published. The important 1966 theatre adaptation of *The Trial* by Jan Grossman and his insightful notes (Grossman 1964), published prior to the staging of the play in 1966 in Prague's "Divadlo on the Balustrade" are among the most original and resonant cultural events of the 1960s. Though culturally important events relating to Kafka had preceded the famous 1963 conference on Kafka in Liblice, a castle just north of Prague owned by the Czech Academy of Sciences, the conference has been credited with introducing Kafka to Communist Eastern Europe.

Curiously, Eduard Goldstücker, perceived as a key figure of the conference and the foremost Czech Kafka scholar, hardly mentioned *The Trial* in his Liblice presentation and other critical studies of the same period; "curiously," because Jiří Stromšík (1992) examined the reading practices in Czechoslovakia in the 1960s and in *samizdat* literature after 1968 and argued

[77] "Der Bau" was printed in the journal *Světová literatura*, 1957, in Eisner's translation.

that Kafka had a special significance for readers who lived in a totalitarian society. Unlike the French and German readers of the 1940s and 1950s, who read Kafka's texts symbolically, „als Aussagen über den *Sinn* der Existenz," the Czech readers of the 1960s read them „quasi-realistically," they „confronted" the texts with their every day experiences; the texts were for them „Aussagen über konkrete *Erscheinungsformen*." They saw in Kafka's images „zwar grotesk verzerrte und hyperbolisierte, letzlich aber doch mögliche Lebenssituationen." Kafka's motifs, situations and phrases were not symbols, but „greifbare Realien der totalitären Welt. " (Stromšík 1992, 272) Stromšík lists numerous examples of such readings that demonstrate the reader's identification of the totalitarian system that lacked the separation between the legislative, executive and judicial branches in various moments in Kafka's novels. In reference to Emrich and Brod, Stromšík argued that „Unser Leser würde dann in der so oft diskutierten Proteus-Charakteristik Klamms schwerlich einen metaphysischen Hintergrund, geschweige denn eine ‚überpersonale Liebesmacht' sehen, sondern vielmehr die typische *Gesichtslosigkeit* des ‚absoluten Apparatchiks.'"(Stromšík 1992, 274) Stromšík suggested that for post-1968 readers, whose careers and dignity were threatened rather than their lives, Kafka offered numerous „Identifizierungsmöglichkeiten." (Stromšík 1992, 276)

Stromšík proposed two ways (Erkenntnisrichtungen) in which such confrontations of literary image with life situations (wirkliche Lebenssituation) contribute to our understanding of the text as well as of the self. First, the reader may apply the literary image, or rather a part of a complex image, in order to gain a critical distance from, and insight, into his own life. Second, applying Kafka's images to life situations can lead to new interpretations of the literary text. Unlike other critics, who warn against such confrontations and find them misleading (e.g.

Thorlby 1976), Stromšík insists that such readings can contribute to understanding when an element is lifted along with the entire semantic context:

> die scheinbar gleichartigen Elemente (…) auch mitsamt ihrem semantischen Umfeld in dem jeweiligen Bezugssystem (…) gleichgesetzt werden können; es ließe sich sogar sagen, daß der Erkenntniswert des Vergleichs in direktem Verhältnis zur Flächengröße dieses Umfelds steht. In Kafkas Fall geht es vor allem darum, ob auch die allen seinen Bildern, Urteilen und Charakteristiken inhärente Ambivalenz und mehrfache Relativierung in den Vergleich mit einer Lebenssituation einbezogen werden können.

According to Stromšík, a confrontation between a particular political and historical reality and Kafka's images can lead to a better understanding of the author. Stromšík brought as an example a study by J.P. Stern, who proposed a parallel between the structure of the *Gericht* in *The Trial* and the Nazi judicial system and legislation. (Stromšík 1992, 280)

Stromšík did not avoid the obvious question of anticipation, or prophecy that logically stems from his discussion of resemblances between Kafka's images and a specific totalitarian society.

> Gibt es in der Struktur seiner Bilder und in seiner Schaffungsmethode ein substantielles tertium comparationis mit dem Totalitarismus, oder geht es bei den einzelnen Ähnlichkeiten nur um rein zufällige Koinzidenzen, die sich jedem rationale Zugriff entziehen? (Stromšík 1992, 281)

He rejected the idea that the similarity is coincidental, and concluded that the similarity between some of the images of Kafka's „Anti-Welt," and totalitarian reality is the result of Kafka's ability to depict "eine allgemeinere Paradoxie, die auch jedem Totalitarismus innewohnt." (Stromšík 1992, 284) Kafka induced this "Paradoxie" from the reality of his own life.

The absence of any identification between Kafka's fictional world and the everyday reality (or the past) in Goldstücker's writing is noticeable especially if we consider that the 1963 Kafka conference happened around the time when steps were taken to rehabilitate the victims of the 1950s political trials, like Goldstücker himself. In this chapter, I discuss the 1963 Liblice conference and Eduard Goldstücker as its main figure. I attempt to understand the rhetorical strategies that characterized the discussion of Kafka in the 1960s, at Liblice as well as in Goldstücker's writings, and situate Goldstücker within the broader context of reading practices during the 1960s in Czechoslovakia and elsewhere.

The 1963 Kafka conference has been valued as the seminal event in the reception of Kafka in Communist Eastern Europe, an event that influenced Marxist literary theory and even sparked off the liberalization process in Czechoslovakia. (French 1982; Bathrick 1995) From today's point of view, it is striking that an author and a conference devoted to him could stir an international debate, influence the cultural policies of several countries, mark the dawning of a new political age, and be celebrated by some and fiercely condemned by others for decades.

The contemporary resonance of the conference is demonstrated by a number of recent commemorative events and memoirs written by some participants: Werner Mittenzwei (2004), Klaus Hermsdorf (2006), Eduard Goldstücker (1989; in Czech 2003 and 2005[78]), and Alexej Kusák (2003). In 2008 at least two events commemorated the 45th anniversary and examined its legacy: The Prague Theatre in Dlouhá performed an improvised reading-play *Kafka je Mrkev*, a

[78] The Czech version came out in two volumes and differs from the German one in structure and in content. The German edition is more comprehensive. Goldstücker, who returned to Prague in 1990, was reluctant to publish his memoir in Czech. He was persuaded to do so by his nephew, the writer and diplomat Jiří Gruša, who recorded his memories. The second volume came out only posthumously.

parody on the conference.[79] A more celebratory tone characterized the conference "Kafka and Power, 1963-1968-2008" in October 2008 in the same Liblice castle, organized by Institut für Textkritik in Heidelberg and Ústav pro soudobé dějiny AVČR in Prague; one of the organizers assessed the significance of the conference as the "symbol of the revival of intellectual and artistic liberties within the Communist regime."[80] Still, despite and perhaps because of its legendary status, there are hardly any critical examinations of the conference. (Reiman 2003, 2)

Curiously, the 2008 Liblice Conference did not meet with much interest among contemporary Czech *Germanists*. The 1963 conference is more valued in German speaking countries than in the Czech Republic; the commemorative event in 2008 was organized by a German university. Some Czech historians perceive the 1963 event as merely one, relatively insignificant, of several that marked the process of liberalization during the sixties, as Oldřich Tůma, head of the Contemporary History Institute in Prague argued in his welcoming address in the 2008 Liblice conference. The few debates that did take place reflected divisions along political and personal lines. The conference has been celebrated by its participant Alexej Kusák (2003), but dismissed by anti-Marxist critics such as Bohumil Doležal (1994).

In the 1960s as well as in 2008, Kafka and the Liblice conference had a different significance in Czechoslovakia and abroad. The German-writing author from Prague had a special importance for West Germans who were interested in and sympathized with once German speaking Prague; Kafka served them as a symbol and a connecting point. Conversely, it was also this "Western" significance of Kafka that highlighted Kafka's importance for those

[79] Parodying conferences of Czech writers and academics has its own history and tradition: Ivan Klíma published a parody- play *Zámek* (*The Castle,* 1964), ridiculing the practices of Czech writers.
[80] Zipp – deutsch-tschechische Kulturprojekte. http://www.projekt-zipp.de/de/kafka/konferenz

Czech reform-oriented Marxist literary scholars who wanted to claim the author for Socialism. Finally, it was by the same token of being popular in the West and prohibited at home that Kafka appealed to a younger Czech generation in the early 1960s, critical of the political status quo as well as of the pro-reform Marxist activities such as the Liblice Conference that they considered lame.[81]

Archival evidence demonstrates that the Communist bureaucratic hierarchy controlled, and was deeply concerned and involved with, the Liblice Conference since its inception.[82] The conference was approved by the Central Committee of the Communist Party, and closely monitored by the Czechoslovak state organs (e.g. the censor office) whose employees wrote reports on it. As we learn from his memoirs, even the Czechoslovak President at the time, Antonín Novotný, commented on Kafka's writings and the response of the Communist Party to the conference during its preparation. (*pez*, 2003) Ironically, Kafka and the interpretation of his texts became topics for bureaucratic discourse.

I argue that in 1963, Kafka became a coded symbol for a direct discussion of Stalinism. Eduard Goldstücker, the key figure in the conference, was a former diplomat, a scholar of German, a witness for the prosecution in the 1950s Rudolf Slánský show trial and a defendant in his own trial, a victim of the anti-Semitic purge of the Communist Party. Did Goldstücker read his own 1953 trial and the false testimony he was forced to deliver against his one-time patron within the Communist Party, Rudolf Slánský, through the prism of Kafka's novel? What role did the reading of Kafka play in his self-understanding in his 1989 memoir entitled appropriately,

[81] Interview with Ivan Martin Jirous, Prague, June 2011.
[82] Národní archiv (National Archive),Fond Eduard Goldstücker,

Prozesse? On the basis of his writings and archival documents, I examine the extent to which he interpreted his experiences of totalitarianism through the Kafka's fictional universe. I argue that Goldstücker slowly came to understand his own past in terms borrowed from Kafka's *Trial*; the year 1963 marks a stage in this process... I also demonstrate that he had exterior political reasons to be cagey about the political aspect of his reading of *The Trial* whether or not he had already developed it to the extent that is explicit in his 1989 published memoirs.

The conference was followed with lively interest from abroad and led to a debate not just among the participants but also with key international cultural figures (Goldstücker, the Marxist critics Roger Garaudy and Ernst Fischer, and the East German Alfred Kurella, the functionary of SED). In this chapter, I explore the role the Liblice Conference played in the way the Czechs viewed their recent past during the first half of the sixties. On the basis of Goldstücker's writing, some of the conference papers, and the memoirs by Goldstücker and Kusák, I discuss how the Liblice conference functioned as a way of dealing with the past; how people in the early 1960s looked back at the 1950s and then how the same and different people during the 1990s looked back at the 1960s. I place this Czech case in the larger context of reading Kafka as the prophet of totalitarianisms, both of the Nazi and Stalinist varieties (Arendt, 1944; Anders, 1951) and attempt to articulate when and by whom Kafka was read in a similar fashion in Czechoslovakia. The Czechoslovak reading of Kafka, especially Goldstücker's, thus joins an interpretative tradition that originated in the 1920s. For Max Brod, Kafka was a religious thinker, a modern Job, a figure whose life deserved scrutiny at least as much as his writing. Other authors valued his gift of clairvoyance, reading him as anticipating twentieth-century

totalitarianisms. I explore to what extent is the Czech reception a specific case of this general trend across contexts.

I discuss the various positions and attitudes towards the Liblice Conference and place them in the broader context of debates over aesthetics in Czechoslovakia that was going through a process of political liberalization. Some Marxists strove for expansion of the notion of realism to include Modernist authors such as Joyce or Kafka. (Ernst Fischer, and later Goldstücker, 1968) In 1963, Goldstücker was more simplistic, reading Kafka as depicting alienation that he acknowledged to persist under Socialism. The more open critics of socialist reality perceived the opaqueness of the conditions they were living under (Kusák 2003, Fischer 1963), and attributed to Kafka prophetic or visionary qualities, the ability to see through this opaqueness.

In my discussion of the reactions to the Kafka conference, I also include critical voices such as those of the critic Přemysl Blažíček, the writer Josef Škvorecký and the exilic writer and *Germanist* Rio Preisner, who have not been considered in the existing literature on the conference. Their views provide a context that allows for a more nuanced depiction of Goldstücker's opinions against the background of anti-Marxist voices, as well as alternative perceptions of Kafka in the 1960s.

Kafka as a Prophet

Kafka was read as anticipating fascism by critics such as Max Brod (1937); Günther Anders (1951) and Hannah Arendt (1944) addressed the topic. In his 1937 biography, Max Brod described how Kafka anticipated fascism in his novel, and compared his late friend to a prophet.

According to Brod, Kafka must have written the beginning of *The Trial*, the arrest of Josef K., in "einem Anfall von Trance, von Hellsichtigkeit." Brod continues: "gab es im Jahre 1914 diese anliegenden schwarzen Uniformen mit Schnallen, Taschen, Knöpfen, Gürtel?" (Brod 1991, 158) Brod pondered the role of a prophet in Kafka's story "Josephine, die Sängerin," an ironic representation of a prophet, "der eitle Prophet," a vain, contemptuous, false prophet. (Brod 1991, 168). Brod distinguished Kafka from such a „vain" prophet; a fictional character with its author: "Kafka selbst ist das Beispiel des Gegentyps, der bescheiden, demütig, nicht das Geringste von solcher ‚Erlösergeste' an sich hatte." It is possible, argues Brod, that if it were not for the unfavorable circumstances, Kafka could have achieved "den Rang der grossen historisch wirksamen Verkünder wahrer Religiosität." (Brod 1991, 168) Kafka "in seinem speziellen, jüdischen Falle diesen Anschluss an das Volk gesucht hat." Kafka was a preacher (Verkünder) of the "true religion," able to prophesize through his work, through texts.

In 1946, Günther Anders examined the theme of Kafka's religiosity, prevalent in the early interpretations: „Kafka wird als ‚*homo religiosus*' bezeichnet; der einzige Zugang zu seiner versperrten Welt, versichert man, sei der religiöse." (Anders 1951, 71) Anders' is a polemic against Max Brod's understanding of Kafka. Anders claims that in our secular times, no one would describe Kafka with words such as *Heiliger*, *Prophet*, *Stifter, Reformator*, *Häretiker.* (Anders 1951, 71) „In der Tat kann der ungewisse Ausdruck [homo religiosus] auch nicht eigentlich präzisiert werden (...)" Anders attempts to find out why was Kafka described so vaguely by some interpreters (Anders 1951, 72) and replaces the concept of religion with „Ritualismus ohne Ritual," *Ritualismus* without any content. (Anders 1951, 77) Also the victims

of Stalinist trials, in Žižek's (2001) reading, are expected to play along, to participate in the ritual whose only purpose is the ritual itself. The ritual loses its meaning when acknowledged as such.

Unlike earlier generations, Kafka did not know *what* to do; which obligations were binding (*verbindlich*). Kafka's times were marked by the combination of *Ritualismus* and *Agnostizismus*. Anders drew a parallel between Kafka's *Ritualismus* and *Agnostizismus* and fascism:

> Wo gibt, wo gab es Agnostizismus in Verbindung mit Skrupelhaftigkeit und Ritualismus? Wo gilt Kafkas kategorischer Imperativ? Unter dem faschistischen Terror, unter dem niemand weiß, *was* jeweils von ihm gefördert wird, warum etwas gefördert wird – wo aber die skrupelhafteste Erfüllung des Undurchsichtigen oder Unbekannten von ihm erwartet wird. (Anders 1951, 78)

Anders links Kafka's texts and Nazism. He claims that the prerogatives typical for Kafka's texts - the imperative of his characters to fulfill unknown and opaque obligations - were typical of fascism.

Hannah Arendt offers a metaphysical reading of Kafka, but also addresses the problems inherent in the concepts of foreshadowing or anticipation. In her 1944 essay, „Franz Kafka: A Revaluation," she quotes the words of the chaplain from *The Trial*, who explains to K.: „for it is not necessary to accept everything as true, one must accept it as necessary." (Arendt 1994, 70) The „appearance of necessity" and the „admiration of the people for necessity," in which K. is caught characterizes, according to Arendt, modernity: „It has been characteristic of our history-conscious century that its worst crimes have been committed in the name of some kind of necessity or in the name—and this amounts to the same thing—of the ‚wave of the future.'" (Arendt 1994, 71) K. in *The Trial* submits to this law of necessity. Rather than foreshadowing

future society, Arendt reads the novel as offering a „critique of the pre-war Austro-Hungarian bureaucratic regime." This has however not been recognized by readers in the 1920s for whom the novel expressed „a terrible theology" rather than insight into their own institutions. (Arendt 1994, 72)

Arendt pointed out that in the forties, Kafka's prose had been read as a „forecast of a world to come": (Arendt 1994, 73)

> The generation of the forties and especially those who have the doubtful advantage of having lived under the most terrible regime history has so far produced know that the terror of Kafka adequately represents the true nature of the thing called bureaucracy – the replacing of government by administration and of laws by arbitrary decrees.

Arendt argued against seeing the universe of Kafka's prose as a prophecy: „Kafka's so-called prophecies were but a sober analysis of underlying structures which today have come into the open." (Arendt 1994, 74) Kafka strove against this necessity; but first he had to „anticipate the destruction of a misconstructed world," world without freedom and free will, in which necessity rules.

„A faith in necessity", is characteristic of the *The Trial*. The novel however differs from the *Castle.* While Josef K. in Kafka's earlier novel submits to his execution „without struggle," (Arendt 1994, 71) K. in *The Castle* is quite a different figure, „the only normal and healthy human being in a world where everything human and normal, love and work and fellowship, has been wrested out of men's hands." (Arendt 1994, 73) K. strives for „universals", which are no commonplace, and therefore his aspiration becomes „exceptional and scandalous". (Arendt 1994, 73)

Though Arendt rejects reading Kafka's work as anticipation or prophecy of reality to come, she still reads Kafka retrospectively through recent history. Her essay contains internal contradictions. It links the universe of Kafka's fiction with her contemporary reality. „We know that Kafka's construction was not a mere nightmare." (Arendt 1994, 74) Despite her rejections of reading of Kafka as prophecy, Arendt does not fully let go of the concept when she notes that „more recent times" confirmed that „Kafka's nightmare of a world was a real possibility whose actuality surpassed even the atrocities he describes" (…)

Arendt wrote about *The Trial*, in her 1944 essay, after the Stalinist and Nazi show trials and terror. On one level, she rejects the metaphysical possibility of prophecy. As a scholar, she suggests a contextual reading placing him in his immediate late Hapsburg historical context. But writing during the worst years of the Second World War, she, like many other readers, could not help interpreting Kafka's text as contemporary, outside of Kafka's proper historical context. The apparent gifts of foreshadowing, anticipation, and prophecy are attributed to authors only in retrospect, with the knowledge of what happened after the work had been written. Arendt's reading of *The Trial* could not help being anachronistic (Tucker 2007) while making the text relevant and immediate. This reading almost forced itself on Arendt's contemporaries, for example Brod's reading of the description of the guards' uniforms in *The Trial* is more ominous than in the original context. (Anderson 1992, 158)

The nearest Arendt comes to reconciling the historical with the contemporary "prophetic" readings of Kafka is in explaining the particular properties of Kafka's writings that facilitate or even demand a contemporary reading based on Kafka's abstract plans. She offers an interesting architectural metaphor of blueprints to describe the relationship between reality and fiction in

Kafka's writing. Kafka is not interested in „the description of the world as phenomenon." He differs from the Surrealists who aim at describing reality in its contradictions: „While the surrealist's favorite method is always photomontage, Kafka's technique could best be described as the construction of models. (…) Kafka's stories are such blueprints; they are the product of thinking rather than of mere sense experience." (Arendt 1994, 76-77) From discussing the relationship between fiction and reality (mimesis), Arendt slips into discussing the relationship between the text and its reader. Reading of Kafka's texts requires imagination:

> Blueprints cannot be understood except by those who are willing and able to realize by their own imagination the intentions of architects (...). This effort of imagination is demanded from the readers of Kafka's stories. Therefore, the mere receptive reader of novels, whose only activity is identification with one of the characters, is at a complete loss when reading Kafka. (...) For in Kafka's books there is no element of daydreaming or wishful thinking. Only the reader for whom life and the world and man are so complicated, of such terrible interest, that he wants to find out some truth about them (...) may turn to Kafka and his blueprints, which sometimes in a page, or even in a single phrase, expose the naked structure of events. (Arendt 1994, 77)

Kafka had some Czech readers „for whom life and the world and man [were] so complicated, of such terrible interest," so they turned to Kafka's blueprints. I examine next what prompted readers like Goldstücker to turn to Kafka.

The Case of Goldstücker

Prophecy is linked to necessity: the Old Testament prophets described what would happen necessarily or at least if people do not repent. Necessity also characterizes the Marxist view of

history, especially of the East European variety since Plekhanov. Soviet and Czechoslovak Communism, like in Christianity, had its prophets, necessities, martyrs, and heretics.

Arendt read *The Trial* as a universe in which K. has to submit to necessity. She described the faith in necessity as characteristic of modernity, which yielded two totalitarian systems, National Socialism and Stalinist Communism. Cold War philosophers like Isaiah Berlin (1969) and Karl Popper (1964) devoted long essays to attempt to refute respectively, historical inevitability (the title of Berlin's essay) and historical necessity (Popper in the *Poverty of Historicism*). The faith in necessity and in the submission to it characterized the behavior of the defendants in the Stalinist political trials, including in 1950s Czechoslovakia. Later accounts of their attitudes towards their arrest, investigation, and the authorities, are full of paradoxes. The interrogators strove to convince the defendants of their guilt and have them accept „every possible formulation of confession the interrogator offered." (Margolius 2006, 198-199) The defendants believed in their guilt, while at the same time, were convinced of their innocence. High Communist officials, they did not stop believing in the Party and in the underlying ideology that emphasized the inevitability of historical progress. To use Arendt's terms, they were functionaries of a „faith in necessity." "The words of the prison-chaplain in *The Trial* reveal the faith of bureaucrats as a faith in necessity, of which they themselves are shown to be the functionaries." Joseph K. submitted to necessity, to his trial: therein lies his guilt.

In a chapter on the "poetics" of the early 1950s political trials in Czechoslovakia, "The Poetics of the Political Trial," Peter Steiner pointed out the "strong anticipatory power, an uncanny ability to foreshadow future events," which was typical of public utterances in a Communist society. (Steiner 2000, 185) This applies to the case of Rudolf Slánský and his

fellow accused who were sentenced "by the very first sentence publicly announcing their arrest." (Steiner 2000, 185) Steiner retold a story narrated originally in a novel by Josef Škvorecký about a Czech engineer who was inadvertently forced into emigration after a report had been printed in the Czechoslovak Communist daily *Rudé právo* asserting that he slandered his country during a conference in London and defected. The engineer attempts to set this report straight, and although the authorities repeatedly assure him that he had no reason to worry, he notices that he is being followed. As a reaction to the perceived suspicions, he eventually ends up emigrating, fulfilling the "fate" that has originally been "set out" for him. The originally unfounded statement assumes the power of a prophecy. Kafka's prose too, according to Steiner, has been read in Communist Czechoslovakia as having such anticipatory power: Kafka's fiction was understood as bearing a mimetic relationship to the reality of the 1950s. Kafka possessed the "gift of clairvoyance" in the eyes of his readers:

> (…) defying the words of Jesus, Kafka did become a prophet with honor in his homeland, for in the 1950s many Czech readers drew in their minds a precariously close parallel between his fiction and the Stalinist system in which they lived. (Steiner 2000, 186)

Steiner's claim is interesting, but it requires several qualifications. First, in chronological terms: the few anecdotic examples of how Kafka was read in 1950s Czechoslovakia do not support a sweeping claim about the identification of contemporary reality with Kafka's prose. *The Trial* was, after all, published in Czech only in 1958, six years after the Slánský trials. Kafka's books were available in German in the University library, but the library policy was restrictive and not every reader was able to access them.[83] As for reading Kafka in the 1940s, Škvorecký wrote in 1983 how he bought the 1935 Czech edition of the *Castle* in 1944, and read it as a criticism of

[83] Interview with Jindřich Toman, Spring of 2009. Josef Čermák described the situation in the National library in Prague during the „normalization." (Placák, 2011, 4).)

the Austro-Hungarian bureaucracy. (Škvorecký 1984, 154) Diaries and memoirs that would provide any insight into reading Kafka in the 1950s are scarce, and the few existing essays and diary entries reveal surrealist and existentialist readings.[84] There is insufficient evidence to infer Steiner's conclusions. There is far more evidence to support the picture he drew if we move it forward to the mid and late 1960s. (Stromšík, 1992)

Goldstücker is a good example for these contradictions. He attempted to understand the defendants' (his own) submission, their confessions and even the faith in the need for the accusations against them, by the psychoanalytical theory according to which victims „identify with the aggressors." (Liehm 1968, 74) In hindsight, it is tempting to perceive their struggle, or rather their submission to the legal machinery and acceptance of their guilt, through the prism of Arendt's interpretation of Kafka's novels.

Construction of a Political Trial

Goldstücker (1913-2000), born to a Jewish family in Slovakia, was a Communist Party member since 1936. Previously, he had been briefly a Zionist. He worked for the exile government in London during WWII, and served as the first Czechoslovak ambassador to Israel from 1949 to 1951. After he was released from prison, in 1955 (one of the first political prisoners to be released), he was very soon fully rehabilitated, and his Party membership was declared uninterrupted since 1936. Goldstücker opted twice for exile: in 1939, and in 1968. He returned to Czechoslovakia in 1990. Goldstücker was arrested in December 1951 in the wave of purges that

[84] E.g. the diaries and other texts by Zbyněk Havlíček, the artists Zbyněk Sekal and Mikuláš Medek , the articles by Ivan Dubský and Mojmír Hrbek.(1957).

culminated in the Slánský trial, officially „The Trial with the Leadership of the Anti-State Conspiratorial Center Headed by Rudolf Slánský.“[85] The „Conspiratorial Center,“ allegedly aimed at „destroying the people's democratic state and restoring capitalism“. (Ministerstvo spravedlnosti, 1953, 2/1) In October 1952, Goldstücker and Pavel Kavan were „trained“ to act as witnesses in this trial. (Ministerstvo spravedlnosti, 1953, 95) Slánský and the other thirteen defendants were accused of espionage, high treason, and more. Eleven of the accused were executed. Goldstücker served as a witness for the prosecution in the trial, and testified that he mediated between Slánský and the agent Koni Zilliacus. Sometime in late 1952 or early 1953, a plan was conceived to „liquidate those who assisted the Center“ and try them in additional trials. Several groups were constructed: bourgeois-nationalists (often a code for Slovaks) and Zionists and Trotskyites (a code for Jews).[86] The "Center" allegedly attempted to take over the foreign affairs of Czechoslovakia. „Therefore it placed in the important and deciding positions in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Trotskyites, Zionists, bourgeois nationalists and other enemies of the Czechoslovak people (...)“ (This is text of the *Indictment*, Žaloba) In 1953 , Goldstücker was tried along with three other former diplomats, Pavel Kavan, Karel Dufek, and Richard Slánský (brother of the executed Rudolf Slánský) for espionage and high treason. On May 26th, 1953, Goldstücker and Richard Slánský were sentenced to life-long imprisonment, the other two defendants for twenty-five years in prison each.

---

[85] *Proces s vedením protistátního spikleneckého centra v čele s Rudolfem Slánským*. Praha: Ministerstvo spravedlnosti, 1953, 94-97 contain the testimony of Eduard Goldstücker. The following account of Goldstücker's case rest on archival material contained in Prague's *Národní archiv*. "Personal Fond of Eduard Goldstücker" (uncatalogued). Osobní fond Eduarda Goldstückera. (Uncatalogued.) and „Fond Leoš Houska“.

[86] Testimony of Vladimír Kohoutek, September 30, 1955, 88.

Confessions and testimonies were the main pillars of the show trials. The indictments were based on the defendants' „confessions," which were corroborated by forced testimonies of other defendants. Goldstücker's "role" as a link between Slánský and the agent Koni Zilliacus, as well as his „connections" with spies in Israel, were „proved" by the testimonies of Geminder and London. The indictment quoted Goldstücker's confession, for example his alleged conversation with Rudolf Slánský in 1946: „Slánský dispersed my fears that my enemy past will harm me, saying that he counts on my cooperation and has plans for me. He recommended that I change my name to "Zlatistý" [Golden]. My past will disappear and he will be better able to promote me." (Ministerstvo spravedlnosti, 1953, 3/2) Confessions were also the most important mitigating circumstance. The fact that all four defendants in that minor trial following the main trial confessed was indicated as a reason for not sentencing them to death.

In 1963, on the occasion of the Czechoslovak Supreme Court's investigation of the 1953 trial, Richard Slánský testified that his confession was coerced by physical and psychological violence, „otherwise no such confession would happen, since I did not commit any criminal act."[87] Interestingly, the lawlessness of the trial with the four former diplomats had already been investigated in 1955, when in December the attorney general filed a complaint against the sentence passed in May 26th, 1953, in the criminal matter against Goldstücker, Kavan, and Dufek. On the basis of this investigation, the Supreme Court abolished the 1953 judgment.

It is fascinating that already in 1955, merely two years after Goldstücker's trial and before Khrushchev's famous 1956 speech, the mechanisms employed to construct political trials were revealed, thematized and exposed as unlawful in Czechoslovakia, albeit not in public of

[87] File1 Nt 027/63.

course, but within the discourse between the organs of party-state. Documents from November and December 1955[88] that I discovered in Goldstücker's file in the National Archive provide a unique insight into the circumstances of Goldstücker's arrest, interrogations, and trial. As part of the investigation, the former defendants were questioned, as well as their former interrogators, Vladimír Kohoutek, Bohumil Doubek, and Vlastimil Volkán. The conclusions of the investigation spoke of „artificially constructed anti-state criminal activity," and concluded that the (senate of the) Supreme Court broke the law.

In his testimony of November 16th, 1955, Goldstücker gives what may be his first account of his arrest and investigation:

> On the day of my arrest I was brought to the office, where four agents were present: a captain whose name I don't know (grey, smooth, talked with a lisp), second lieutenant (from Ostrava, according to his accent, of a taller stature), another second lieutenant (smaller, dark-skinned), and a major, who entered later (bald, protruding ears, blue eyes, according to his behavior probably a superintendent).

The Captain allegedly told Goldstücker that he was put to prison „by the decision of the Party," and it was necessary that he admitted to his crimes. Goldstücker reports: „I replied that I am not aware of any crimes, and asked what am I being accused of. To that the captain replied that it is not them who would tell me what I am accused of, but I must tell them." Unlike Kafka's doubles, Goldstücker's grotesque interrogators came in four. Also unlike in Kafka's novel, the

[88] NS ČSR, Fond „Nejvyšší soud," ČSR, Praha. 1 T 1/53, E. Goldstücker a spol., Národní archiv, Praha. The folder containing the materials re: complaint (Goldstücker, Doubek, Kohoutek, Volkán), marked Prz 27/55, ZO5884/55.

indictment was clear, constructed and absurdly false as it was. But as in *The Trial*, the burden of accusation and guilt lied on Goldstücker, within the strange logic and rhetoric of the political trials, as the accused was led to construct and confess the already scripted crimes. Goldstücker's own continuous sense of personal guilt and failure, as I discuss later, also resembles K's.

The 1955 report states that Volkán, Doubek, and Kohoutek confirmed that the „protocols of Goldstücker and Kavan were twisted and that psychological and physical violence was used against them, as well as non-existing Party resolution (...) the former second lieutenant of the Interior Ministry Kohoutek explained that no defense could be admitted into the protocol that would interfere with the ‚essential line' of the investigation, which was 'given beforehand by the operational sector, for example that a certain person is a spy.'"

The testimonies of Goldstücker, as well as the interrogators, reveal the mechanisms used in the political show trials, which strictly followed Soviet guidelines. The Soviet advisers arrived in Czechoslovakia in 1949 to enforce Soviet principles in exposing the „enemies of the Party." (Kaplan, 66-68) The first advisors, Likhachov and Makarov, established the principle that the State Security (StB) rather than the Party must expose the enemies. The main task of the security service became the search for the enemies and the production of political trials. (Kaplan, 68) The Soviet advisers, (namely Georgij) supervised and directed also the trial of Goldstücker. The main goal of the interrogations was to obtain confessions. The interrogator Volkán explained his role: „(..) Kohoutek merely told me that Goldstücker engaged in espionage and must confess to it." (Testimony of Vlastimil Volkán, 94) This was achieved by long interrogations of 12-14, sometimes 16 hours during the night, sleep deprivation, hunger, and threats. Forced and false testimonies of other accused were used to pressure defendants into admission of the alleged

accusations. For example, testimonies of London and Geminder were used to make Goldstücker admit criminal activities during his service as a Czechoslovak ambassador to Israel. Goldstücker testified: „Because I saw Geminder's signature on the protocol in which he asserted untruthful matters, also such that he could not even know about, I realized that the interrogators can prove about me whatever they want with the help of such witnesses. As a result of that I was psychologically broken and accepted the conclusions of the interrogators. I confessed to all the matters for which I was sentenced and which I have never done."[89]

Important elements of the interrogations were the so-called „confrontations" between defendants and witnesses. The interrogator Volkán describes how he prepared Goldstücker for the confrontation with Slánský. Goldstücker was given a script which he had to memorize; his part was rehearsed a number of times before the confrontation during which he had to repeat it with no alterations. Similarly, the defendants had to memorize the scripted answers for the trial; neither they nor the investigators were allowed to deviate from the script. The more important trials were monitored by an official stationed in a room adjacent to the courtroom. This official was comparing the script with the actual proceeding, and marked any differences committed either by the defendants or by the procurators. The directions established by the administration of the Ruzyně prison had to be strictly followed. (Testimony of Vlastimil Volkán)

[89] „Protokol sepsaný se svědkem Eduardem Goldstückerem", November 16th, 1955. (Protocole with the witness Eduard Goldstücker, 3 (15).

The Production of the Protocol: The "textual" Aspect of the Political Trial

During the 1955 questioning, the former interrogator Kohoutek explained that vagueness was the goal in documenting the defendants' spying activities. The Soviet adviser Georgij insisted that no specific information should be put on record. „Specific information would weaken the protocols." (90) Goldstücker reported that his investigators wrote down what he did not say; facts that contradicted the truth.[90] The interrogations were directed according to the previously prepared accusations. Vlastimil Volkán, the interrogator assigned to Goldstücker, described the complex hierarchical process in which the protocols from the interrogations were shaped until they became „correct":

> Kohoutek was giving me directions for the investigation of each case, he requested that I give him drafts of protocols, which he then corrected and returned to me in their new versions. After they were revised, Kohoutek submitted these drafts to Doubek for approval. Doubek corrected them again and returned for revisions. Only after they were revised were the protocols given to the Soviet advisers for approval; they also had their comments, and on the basis of these comments I was then again rewriting the drafts of the protocol, which I again submitted for an approval in a similar way.[91]

The secret police agents, as well as the Soviet advisers, employed a striking metaphoric language. „The purpose of all corrections was to remove the so-called 'water'."[92] Their metaphors were often very crude, for example the famous declaration by Likhachov: „Stalin sent me here to make trials, I can't waste time. I didn't come here to debate, I came to Czechoslovakia to *svoločiť golovy*. Better to wring one hundred fifty necks than my own." (Kaplan, 68) Karel Šváb (*nomen est omen* - „šváb" means in Czech cockroach) was in charge of

[90] Ibid, 2 (14).
[91] Výpis z výpovědi Vlastimila Volkána, (Testimony of Vlastimil Volkán), December 1st, 1955, 94.
[92] Protokol o výpovědi (Testimony of Vladimír Kohoutek), September 30, 1955.

finding enemies of the Party. „The agency (network of one's own agents) is an insect which we need to use and then squash (*zašlápnout*).“[93] (Kaplan, 72) Also Goldstücker's investigators used blunt metaphors: „the Party *zlomila hůl*“ gave up on Goldstücker („broke a walking stick,“ idiom for „giving up on somebody“) in order to emotionally blackmail him; when Goldstücker protested the changes they made in his protocols, they retorted that the formulations were made so to put things „sharply.“

The political trials in the 1930s in the Soviet Union and in the 1950s in Czechoslovakia, blamed economic and other failures of the system on the „inner enemy“. Profiles of the criminals were created, and then the secret police searched for people who fitted these profiles. Goldstücker fitted: a devoted Communist, a diplomat, a Jew, a person closely linked to the leading political figures. But unlike most of the victims of the 1953 Slánský trial (eleven of them were executed, three received life imprisonments – London, Löbl, Hajdů), Goldstücker was released from prison in 1955, and went on living with the traumatic memory of having been unjustly imprisoned, but more significantly while experiencing guilt (whether perceived or real), of having confessed to deeds he did not commit, of having testified falsely against his mentor and patron Slánský, and of having close relations to the politics that committed these crimes. The experience of trial and imprisonment, as he admitted in an interview in 1968, was crucial for his life:

> One thinks about it all the time, tosses with it from one side to another, it is of course such a point in one's life… he would wish to explain to himself why it all happened, what sense it had, what motivation and goals. (Liehm 1968, 47)

[93] My translation.

After returning from prison, Goldstücker expressed the wish to assume an academic position, and was appointed a professor of *Germanistik* at Charles University, where he had already taught briefly before his arrest in 1951; he became the head of the German department and was appointed full professor in 1964. After 1963, he became known in the West as a Kafka scholar, the organizer of the Liblice conference. Alexej Kusák, one of the speakers at the 1963 Liblice Conference argued that Kafka is relevant in Czechoslovakia, where the word *proces* (trial in Czech), „for twelve years stigmatized our reality." (Kusák 1966, 175) How did Goldstücker attempt to interpret his own trial trauma in 1963, in 1968, and in his 1989 memoir?

Goldstücker: The 1963 Perspective

1963, the year of the Liblice Conference, was also the year when its key figure Eduard Goldstücker received a document declaring his rehabilitation, although it was not made public. (Margolius 2006, 249) In 1963, Josef Urválek, the chief prosecutor in the Slánský trial, resigned from his post as the President of the Czechoslovak Supreme Court. (French, 169) Yet the 1950s *nomenklatura* continued to hold power in 1963, for example, President Antonín Novotný served in his position from 1957 to 1968. In Liblice, Goldstücker did not make an explicit connection between his own trial and Kafka's prose, and he did not refer to the Stalinist past in terms of Kafka's fiction. I need to emphasize that as much as it later became commonplace, or even trite,

to refer to particular situations as „Kafkaesque“, it was not common in the 1950s. Adjectives based on Kafka were used only since the 1960s, when the Czech word „kafkárna“, was coined.[94]

The Liblice Conference is often seen as the beginning of the liberalization, as its symbol as well as its litmus test. As we perceive it today, it became the product of its own reception.[95] Indeed, our contemporary view of the conference was formed by the ensuing international debate, as well as later „legends“ that celebrated or condemned the conference depending on the political position of the critic. The contemporary perception of its significance as an event that marked the beginnings of the liberalization was formed to a large degree by its participants such as Goldstücker and Kusák, and the sympathetic onlookers from abroad, whether they participated in the ongoing debate, followed it with interest, or reported about it.[96]

The critic Alfred French‘s evaluation of Goldstücker and the conference is typical of later receptions of the event that accentuated its role in overcoming Stalinism:

> It was appropriate that the Czech convener was Goldstücker, himself a recently rehabilitated Jewish victim of the political trials. No one could miss the symbolic significance of the occasion: in restoring to Kafka his due position the conference was ceremonially annulling the literary policies of Stalinism. (French 1982, 179)

[94] There is no consensus about the origin of the word *kafkárna.* While Stromšík (1992, 269) claims that the word originated with Bohumil Hrabal, whose 1965 book *Inzerát na dům, ve kterém už nechci bydlet*, included a story titled „Kafkárna“, Josef Čermák places the origin of the word already with Group 42, which espoused the aesthetics of the city and a figure of a night walker. Čermák claims that the word appeared in connection with the exhibition of the artist Hudeček. (Lecture in Franz Kafka Society, Prague, April 2009)

[95] Jürgen Danyel, „Liblice 1963 und die Folgen. Kafka als Chiffre für einen anderen Sozialismus.“ Conference paper, Liblice, 2008.

[96] E.g. the West Berlin journal *alternative*, which in 1965 reprinted seven of the conference papers, along with an extensive selection of Czech and Slovak literary works.

Accounts like this one make the impression that the conference was a platform for open criticism of the past. But the reality was that some speakers were unreformed Marxists, while the rhetoric of more reform-minded speakers such as Goldstücker was very cautious and tactical at best.

Some of the individual papers presented in the 1963 conference have not been critically examined; their merit and contribution to Kafka scholarship have not been considered.[97] (Šámal, 2004) At the 1963 conference, Kafka was rejected as a historical phenomenon irrelevant for contemporary socialist society not only by the GDR delegates (who became synonymous with Communist orthodoxy), but also by a key figure of the conference, Pavel Reiman. Goldstücker's criticism of politics was cautious. To a large extent he maintained the simplifying, dominant Marxist notion of literature. He criticized dogmatism, the cult of personality, and vulgar sociology, terms that were still controversial.[98] Words such as "dogmatism" or "cult of personality" were among the keywords that the censor's office paid attention to: in the Archive of Security Forces, the files of the Censor's Office include articles from newspapers and magazines, with the word "dogmatism" underlined.[99] Goldstücker criticized past approaches to literature; yet he took care to consider the stoker from the first chapter of *Der Verschollene* as representing the working class.

Goldstücker, according to his 1989 memoir, knew of Kafka since the interwar period. He read the Czech translation of the *Castle*, which was published in 1935. As a student of

---

[97] There were no critical discussion of the papers even in the 2008 "Kafka and Power" conference.

[98] These Stalinist "aberrations" had been criticized in the Soviet Union since 1956, but the system in Czechoslovakia remained very rigid until the early 1960s. (Kusák 2003)

[99] E.g. newspaper articles found in the file 318-228-7, Hlavní správa tiskového dohledu (HSTD MV, Censor's Office) one of them dedicated to the interpretation of the period 1949-1956. The "cult of personality" was targeted in 1964. Archiv bezpečnostních složek, (Archive of Security Firces, Prague.)

Germanistik at Charles University in the 1930s, he had only a fleeting knowledge of the author: „Er würde in einer Anthologie Prager deutscher Schriftsteller, die wir an der Fakultät als Behelfsliteratur benutzten, zwar als bedeutender Schriftsteller gewürdigt, aber damit hatte es sich auch.“ (Goldstücker 1989, 285) It is not clear when he read *The Trial* for the first time. In his 1963 conference paper, he referred to the story “Der Heizer“ and to the *Castle*; he mentioned Kafka’s diaries, but *The Trial* only fleetingly.

The conference on Kafka in Liblice in May 1963 aimed officially at discussing the relevance of Kafka for Socialism and Marxist literary theory; the undercurrent of these discussions (as we can discern today) was the covert debate over the Stalinist legacy. Kafka figured as a code for dealing with the past. The ostentatious goals transpire from the internal texts produced by the organizers: to „gain a new view of Kafka and his work from the Marxist point of view.“[100] The conference was organized by the Committee of the Czechoslovak Germanists (in the framework of the Academy of Sciences).[101] There is no consensus on who initiated the conference. Although it is customarily attributed to Eduard Goldstücker, Alexej Kusák claimed credit, as well as a few others.[102]

---

[100] The report by Houska, “K propagaci sborníku ‘Franz Kafka. Liblická conference 1963.’” The National Archive. Fond Leoše Housky. (Leoš Houska Fund.)

[101] Výbor československých germanistů při Kabinetu pro moderní filologii ČSAV, founded in 1961, had nine members, Goldstücker and Reiman were among them. It published the journal *Germanoslavica*.

[102] A fierce dispute between the former émigrés and student and teacher, Kusák and Goldstücker (Kusák was Goldstücker’s former student at Prague’s Charles University), had continued since before 1990. Kusák had been trying to change the more dominant narrative by claiming that the event was “his child”. On January 7th, 1990, Leoš Houska, the secretary of the Committee of the Czech Germanists from 1961 to 1966, wrote a statement titled “How the proposal to organize the Kafka conference in Liblice in 1963 came about,” in which he claimed that “it was first of all Professor Doctor Eduard Goldstücker, who, thanks to his speeches, publications, and his influence deserves to be credited with the organization of the Kafka conference and the ‘return’ of Franz Kafka to his homeland.” (Národní archiv, Fond Leoše Housky) The document includes a handwritten remark on the top of the sheet, “for Prof. Goldstücker.”

The interest in Kafka and consequently the conference were indirectly prompted by J.P. Sartre's speech during the 1962 Peace Congress in Moscow.[103] Sartre protested that „culture is used as weapon", and called for the „demilitarization of culture". Sartre brought as an example, the Western presentation of Kafka as describing bureaucracy under socialism. They „sent him to Russia with the hope that every reader recognizes in his country the world of the *Trial*". As a reaction to this „aggression", the Russians refused to translate him. „And so this author has been

---

In his memoir of the Liblice conference, *Tance kolem Kafky*, Kusák (2003) recalls how he came up with the idea for the conference on a rainy day in September 1962 during a phone conversation with the scholar of Russian literature František Kautman. The two then presented their ideas to Paul Reiman, the honorary chairman of the German section of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences, whom they attempted to gain for the conference. On the basis of their meeting, Reiman promised to invite them to the next meeting of the German section. Kusák reconstructs several operational meetings of the German section, which discussed the conference. He refers to a meeting which took place on September 15th. The minutes include a note that on basis of discussion of Reiman with Kusák and Kautman the ways of celebrating the anniversary of Kafka's birthd should be discussed. Minutes from a meeting on November 7th, mention that the Committee proposes to organize next year a conference to mark Kafka's 80th birthday. Kusák and Kautman were present at the Committee's meeting on November 23rd.

Kusák has repeatedly published his version of the story. Kusák's account of how the conference came about and his "authorship" of the idea for the conference, does not contradict the more generally known account that attributes the conference and the "return of Kafka" to Eduard Goldstücker. Statements in defence of Eduard Goldstücker by Houska do not dispute who originally came up with the idea, but more generally his credits. Kusák attempted to clarify the history and take credit for the conference at lEast since 1988 when he presented his version during a conference in Köln am Rhein. His "thirty-pages long tractatus" is recalled by Vladislav Herink, who, in distrust, sent the text to Goldstücker in Brighton, and quotes from a letter Goldstücker sent him as a reply in a 1994 newspaper article: "I had known already earlier that Kusák passes himself off as the initiator of the Kafka conference, however I did not know that he engineered such a tangle of lies to the purpose that his uninformed audience swallows up his main lie. Forgery has its own typology. Kusák's product belongs to those which, with the help of fabricated testimonies of the dead (Reiman, Fischer, Janouch) wish to discredit those who are alive and attribute, while employing a lie, to its initiator what does not belong to him. The forger relies on the assumption that the living witnesses will not learn about his fabrications, or they will avoid them squeamishly, not to pollute themselves." (Goldstücker's letter quoted in Vladislav Herink, *Moravskoslezský denik*, J27.7.94) Goldstücker used highly expressive language to dismiss Kusák, including metaphors such as "cynical money forgery," "poisonous mud, which sticks to one's heel," etc. Curiously, the terminology of forgery resembles Goldstücker's criticism of Gustav Janouch. In the light of Goldstücker's own trial in the early1950s, he must have been sensitive to what he perceived as "fabricated testimonies," a figure that appeared also in his criticism of Janouch.

Ironically, after their return from exile in 1990, the two adversaries Goldstücker and Kusák lived in the same building in a Prague's housing estate.

[103] *The Moscow Congress for Total Disarmament and Peace*, July 1962. Sartre's speech appeared in Czech in Karel Kosik's journal *Plamen*, 1/1963.

wronged twice: in the West they falsify and twist him, while in the East he is ignored". (Sartre 1963, 56-57) Sartre declared: „cultural competition means abolishing the border, customs and dams and issuing the following peace demand: to whom belongs Kafka, to you or to us, that is, who understands him better?" (Sartre 1963, 58) Sartre's declaration was echoed in Liblice. Ernst Fischer pleaded: "Holt das Werk Kafkas aus unfreiwilligem Exil zurück! Gebt ihm ein Dauervisum!" (Fischer 1966, 168) The demand to bring Kafka back from his "involuntary exile" has apparently its limits: "Dauervisum" suggests a visit, albeit possibly a long one, by a stranger, foreigner, an outsider.

The minutes from the meeting of the Committee of the Czech Germanists on November 23rd, 1962 provide insight into Goldstücker's position at the time. "Comrade Goldstücker presented the proposal of the Committee to organize the Kafka conference in June 1963, at the latest, on the occasion of Franz Kafka's 80th birthday."[104] The report sums up Goldstücker's case: Marxist science has not sufficiently dealt with this important representative of Prague German literature, while in the West after the Second World War Kafka scholarship became very fashionable. Those who wrote in Czechoslovakia about Kafka borrowed the opinions of bourgeois Kafkology. The time had come to say from the Marxist point of view and "from Prague" all that is to say about Kafka. A good starting point could be the articles of Pavel Reiman, the Kafka monographs by the GDR scholars Helmut Richter and Klaus Hermsdorf, or articles by Ernst Fischer. Goldstücker used the term "to ground Kafka" to emphasize the Prague dimension of Kafka's work which should differentiate their approach from those of Western scholars.

[104] The Minutes, p. 2, found in Leoš Houska Fund, National Archive, Prague. My translation.

The source of later disagreements between Goldstücker and the younger Alexej Kusák may be found in Kusák's speech during the same meeting. Kusák argued that the conference should not be provincial: Western scholars should be invited, such as Ernst Fischer and Max Brod. Marxist critics should also be subjected to criticism since their work is excessively sociological. Pavel Reiman, by contrast, argued that Czech Marxist scholars should first discuss among themselves their position towards Kafka before inviting Western speakers.

Twenty-seven delegates took part in the Liblice Conference, organized officially to commemorate what would have been Kafka's eightieth birthday. In addition to Czech speakers, several East German scholars took part, as well as the French and Austrian prominent Marxists, Roger Garaudy and Ernst Fischer. The most debated questions in the conference and in the following international discussion became those of alienation and realism.

In his memoir, Goldstücker recalled how the conference came about:

> Bei unseren Forschungen tauchte immer wieder die Frage auf, weshalb Kafka von den offiziellen Stellen geradezu als der Erzfeind eingeschätzt wurde. Es lag in der Logik der Sache, daß wir auf dem von uns beschrittenen Weg mit der Borniertheiten des Stalinschen sozialistischen Realismus konfrontiert werden mußten. Irgendwann im Jahr 1962 entschloß ich mich, genauer zu untersuchen, ob die offiziellen Vorbehalte gegen Kafka als „bourgeoisen dekadenten" in seinem Werk Rechtfertigung finden könnten. (*Prozesse* 1989, 292)

Goldstücker's initial interest in Kafka, according to his memoir, was political: he attempted to explore why the Communist cultural authorities viewed him as an arch-enemy and whether the official judgment that condemned Kafka as "bourgeois" and "decadent" had any foundation in his writings. It is apparent that Goldstücker's position was not openly critical of the official position towards Kafka at the time of the conference. He was operating from within the existing

discourse. His knowledge of Kafka was at the time limited. In 1989, Goldstücker described his position in 1962 as in a certain distance from the "official places" and their Stalinist attitudes and practices. He may have attempted at the time to remain within the bounds of Communist discourse while pushing it ever so slightly forward against the gravity and inertia of Stalinist discourse of factions within the Communist Party that were quickly becoming a defeated rearguard as the sixties unfolded.

In considering Goldstücker's statements from the 1960s, we must ponder the thin line between his tactical speech acts and his true opinions, or the complicated, and perhaps unconscious, combination of both. Political rhetoric is ubiquitous in Goldstücker's conference presentation, "Über Franz Kafka aus der Prager Perspektive, 1963." Coping with the past is apparent, albeit mainly indirectly, as an underlying theme. Goldstücker dedicated the first part of his paper to the state of Marxist criticism that lagged behind what he termed as Western criticism. The Marxist critics only recently started paying attention to Kafka. Goldstücker situated this new interest in Kafka in the political context of the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1956 and declared the author a victim of the cult of personality: "Franz Kafka, den die ganze Welt uns zuzählt, wurde bei uns, in der ČSSR – und nicht nur bei uns – ein Opfer dessen, was als Folgen des Personenkults bezeichnet wird." (Goldstücker 1966, 24) With this declaration, Goldstücker introduced one of the themes of the conference, the overcoming of rigid ideological practices, "simplification" and "dogmatism." He rejected "vulgar sociologism," but nevertheless described an artwork in Marxist terms as "ein gesellschaftliches Phänomen," (Goldstücker 1966, 29) and argued against "religious and

existential speculations" and interpretations based on the "individual psychological dispositions of the author." (Goldstücker 1966, 27)

The second part of Goldstücker's paper focused on Kafka's relationship to Prague. Goldstücker built on the thesis of Paul Eisner, who is credited with authoring the "Prague interpretation" of Kafka. Eisner, critical of the Western interpreters' unfamiliarity with the local Prague context, explained the phenomenon of the Prague German writers from the specific conditions of double or triple ghettos. Goldstücker echoed Eisner's criticism in emphasizing the need to understand the local social and historical conditions. The "triple ghetto" explains the alleged unnatural, "insular" quality of Kafka's environment towards the end of "bourgeois liberalism." Goldstücker explained Prague's German Jewish literature as emanating from the conditions at the end of the monarchy, from the experience of crisis, which these writers perceived before everybody else. Goldstücker mentioned German imperialist anti-Semitism as an important motivating aspect for the cultural activity of the Prague German Jews. (Goldstücker 1966, 34) This basic argument is reminiscent of Deleuze and Guattari's book on Kafka and minor literature from 1974. Still, while Deleuze and Guattari celebrated Kafka's status as "a minor," Goldstücker considered it a historical condition that needed to be overcome. Goldstücker emphasized that Kafka did not find satisfaction in the neo-romantic, religious or other escapist flights from his predicament. This was exactly the key argument of Deleuze and Guattari. But while Goldstücker refers directly to Eisner, the French authors quote Klaus Wagenbach's 1958 monograph on Kafka.

The third part of Goldstücker's paper was devoted to Kafka's relationship to the working class and to Socialism. With the story, "Der Heizer", Kafka found „den Weg zur Arbeiterklasse"

long before any German writer of his stature. (Goldstücker 1966, 37) Goldstücker built on Wagenbach's study of Kafka's early years which included also information – by now discredited – about Kafka's contacts with Czech anarchists. (Goldstücker very early on dismissed the "anarchist legend" as well as Janouch's *Conversations with Kafka* as a fraud.[105])

The first part of Goldstücker's presentation aimed at criticizing past "dogmatism" (a code for Stalinist terror). The second part introduced the important theme of Prague German Jewish literature. Goldstücker's attempt at situating Kafka in Prague was important in "rehabilitating" the interest in German-Jewish Prague writers, who had been taboo in Czechoslovakia previously. Two years later, Goldstücker organized a conference titled *Weltfreunde* about Prague German writers. The last part is the most accommodating to the dominant, official orthodox ideology. Still, Goldstücker's earlier attack on dogmatism reveals that his rhetoric was of the reform-Communist movement.

In Goldstücker's paper, and the ensuing polemic with Alexej Kusák, Kafka figured as a code for a discussion of the recent past, a nascent discussion in 1963. Literature assumed the place of politics, as in the nineteenth century during the Czech National Revival, when in the absence of political autonomy and self-determination, writer, musicians, and intellectuals took it upon themselves to express the aspirations of the nation they participated in constructing, instead of politicians and absent state institutions. (Preisner 1977) The Kafka conference and the ensuing debate offered ways for people who were closely linked to the politics of their country to come to terms with the legacy of Stalinism.

[105] At a Kafka conference in West Berlin in 1966. (Goldstücker 1983)

The relationship between the totalitarian past and Kafka's universe was indirectly the point of contestation between Goldstücker and Kusák. Unlike Goldstücker, the much younger Kusák discussed directly the particular relevance of Kafka's prose for the recent past. In a few concluding paragraphs that were published in the Czech version of the conference proceedings, but were interestingly not published in the German version. Kusák referred directly to Kafka's *The Trial*:

> Trial, the word which for twelve years stigmatized our reality, is for me the pillar of his work, his noetics; it may be that *Das Schloß* is artistically more accomplished, *Amerika* more rooted in society, but *Der Proceß*, to me, is the basic test probe into the reality of the modern world." (Kusák 1966, 175, my translation)

Like Arendt, Kusák also read *The Trial* as reflecting modern conditions, even though he did not comment on the historical necessity that characterizes Communist and Nazi ideologies.

Anders linked Kafka's prose and Nazism, which he characterized as opaque and non-transparent. Two Liblice speakers, Kusák and Ernst Fischer, used similar figures to describe Socialism. Kusák described the conditions in Socialism as opaque; certain „relationships in society" become „non-transparent" (undurchsichtig). Kafka's texts depict this sort of reality. (Kusák 1966, 180) Ernst Fischer associated the same quality with industrial society: „Auch in der hochentwickelten industriellen Gesellschaft mit all ihrer Undurchsichtigkeit (...)" (Fischer 1966) Both speakers linked their analysis of contemporary conditions to Kafka's fictional world.

The critic Peter Steiner commented on the differences between Kusák and Goldstücker:

> In this politically charged atmosphere [in the early 1960s, when the government still included people implicated directly in the political persecutions of the fifties, VT] it was not surprising that the organizer of the conference and the leading Czech Kafkologist, Eduard Goldstücker, should vehemently reject his junior

> colleague's foray into reader-oriented criticism. Kafka can be correctly understood, he declared authoritatively, only within the social context of his origin and not against a background of what transpired much later. Goldstücker should have known – and not only as a student of Kafka. (Steiner, 186-187)

Steiner alluded here to Goldstücker's own experience of political trials and imprisonment in the 1950s and suggested that Goldstücker rejected any direct connection between Kafka and recent history.

The central issue at the Liblice Conference for the pro-reform Marxists such as Goldstücker was realism. The realism discussion addressed some of the same questions that were raised in the discussions over Socialist Realism in the late 1950s when the topic was debated by Marxist critics in the East and West in articles in the journals *Nová mysl* (8,11/1958, 1,3,4/1959) and *Plamen* (3/59, 4/60). (Šámal 2004). Goldstücker (following Ernst Fischer and Roger Garaudy) argued for an expanded notion of realism that would include works of modernist authors such as Kafka or Joyce, and thus go beyond dogmatic Socialist Realism, the so called construction novels, which, as Alfred French succinctly and fittingly put it, were „anything but realistic." (French 1982) Their goal was to interpret Kafka as an author who depicts alienation, which persists also in Socialism.

Kusák, who repeatedly rejected Goldstücker's statement that *Kafka can be understood only from Prague,* called the author a monumental realist and an author of alienation. Kafka was the author of our absurdities; the situations he described were known from the time of the cult of

personality ("bestimmte, in den sozialistischen Ländern aus der Zeit des Personenkults bekannte Situationen"). Kusák praised Kafka's ability to typify:

> Mit ihrer Hilfe war er imstande zu erkennen, daß ein bestimmter Grad des Undurchsichtigwerdens gesellschaftlicher Beziehungen und die Absolutisierung der institutionellen Macht Tag für Tag absurde Situationen gebiert, in denen Unschuldige eines Verbrechens angeklagt werden, das sie nicht begangen haben, wo es nicht notwendig ist, all das als wahr anzusehen (…) (Kusák 1966, 180)

Kafka, according to Kusák, described opaqueness of social relationships – a condition that Günther Anders attributed to the vision of fascism typical of Kafka's prose.

Goldstücker expressed his conviction about the "Aktualität" of the author in very general terms, by alluding to the conditions of contemporary civilization and Kafka's lack of illusions about this world. Still, his interpretation was designed to make Kafka acceptable to the orthodox political powers of the early 1960s: "Kafka führt bis zur Grenze des Nihilismus heran, doch an dieser Grenze öffnet er doch noch ein Fensterchen zur Hoffnung. Und dieses Fensterchen zur Hoffnung ist der Kampf." (Goldstücker 1966, 284) "Struggle" was a socialist value, and Kafka was presented as a hero who adhered to Socialism. K. was aware of every dehumanizing pressure, but did not give in to it and opposed it. (Goldstücker 1966, 285) Goldstücker raised the question of whether Kafka was relevant to contemporary socialist conditions, and answered in the affirmative. He reacted against the claims that alienation had been overcome under Socialism, and formulated his reply cautiously: "Ist diese Entfremdung überwunden? Das ist eine verwickelte Sache, wir dürfen unser Weltbild nicht vereinfachen." (Goldstücker 1966, 282) He discussed alienation as a concept in Kafka's work that applies also to socialism.

> In dieser Übergangszeit kann es sogar vorkommen – und haben dies schließlich nicht die Erfahrungen unseres Lebens deutlich genug bewiesen?--, daß sich in manchen Etappen

> die Menschen noch viel stärker entfremdet fühlen als im Kapitalismus. (…) weil die Entfremdung existiert, ist Kafka auch bei uns aktuell.“ (Goldstücker 1966, 282)

Goldstücker claimed that “our own lives” exemplified alienation under Socialism; this may be an oblique reference to his own imprisonment.

Goldstücker and Kusák may not have been as far apart as Steiner suggested. The difference between them lies in their rhetorical strategies: while Kusák drew a direct parallel between Kafka’s prose and recent history, Goldstücker cautiously circled around the topic, for example, when he claimed that Kafka had contemporary relevance because alienation persisted also under Socialism: “Und weil die Entfremdung existiert, ist Kafka auch bei uns aktuell.” (Goldstücker 1966, 282) This remark is in Goldstücker’s “Summary of the Discussion,” at the end of the volume. He did not comment on Kafka’s contemporary relevance in his own presentation. He may have tested the ground first in his presentation, and during the conference, before expressing more critical (and sincere) judgments in the summary to the discussion, at the very end, when the opinions he expressed could not be attributed to him personally.

Goldstücker drew a peculiar connection between Kafka and socialist reality in an article called “Jak je to s Franzem Kafkou?” (How is it with Franz Kafka?), published in July 1963 in the literary semi-popular magazine *Literární noviny*, a couple of months after the Liblice conference. In this article he used an interesting rhetorical strategy: Goldstücker read Kafka like those who saw in his visions the anticipation of the Stalinist reality, but instead of criticizing the past, he considered the utility of Kafka in “warding off” Stalinism in the future. Goldstücker

evoked Sartre's speech from the Peace Congress in Moscow and argued: "Sartre pleads for Kafka to be 'demilitarized,' that is, instead of being on one side of the Cold War he should be judged and accepted, but also critically rejected, only on the basis of his own essence." In order to do that, continued Goldstücker:

> (…) one important condition must be fulfilled: It must be ensured that not even in the most monstrous fantasy anything of Kafka's visions of bureaucratic bullying and cruelties could be applied to our public circumstances. If our history showed anything clearly, then it is the fact that everyone who thought that the new, higher human order can be built without humanism and justice (…) was fatally mistaken. (Goldstücker 1964, 27; my translation)

Kafka could be "demilitarized" only in an environment free of Stalinist deformations. Goldstücker pleaded that what some considered a ghost of the past ("Kafka's visions of bureaucratic bullying and cruelties") should not happen in the future. He called for preventing these practices from happening in the future in what rhetorically resembles an incantation. As in his conference paper, he criticized past politics, the "cult of personality" and the "simplification of the world view." (Goldstücker 1964, 24) He relegated "bureaucratic bullying and cruelties" to Kafka's "most monstrous fantasy," rather than to the recent past. He remained cautious in his criticisms.

Goldstücker's stated positions changed between 1963 and 1968, as liberalization progressed. In a 1968 interview, he openly discussed the 1950s political trials. In his introduction, the interviewer, Antonín Liehm, described Goldstücker's „strange identification", with Kafka: „no other Kafkologist in the world experienced Kafka so absolutely." Goldstücker also discussed Kafka's method and the questions of realism, central to discussions after the

Liblice conference. Goldstücker did not draw a direct parallel between Kafka's universe and the show trials, but we can sense it in the background:

> How is it with Kafka's ability to prophesize? Kafka was not a prophet and he never aspired to be one. But it is undoubtful and beyond dispute that in the self-tormenting search for truth about the real conditions of human life in the modern world, he created in his work atmosphere and images, with the help of which people long after him identified their life situation, the powerlessness vis a vis anonymous forces that govern their fates. (Liehm 1968, 40)

In Goldstücker's formulations that „people (...) identified their life situation," and the „powerlessness vis-à-vis anonymous forces," we can sense his reflection on his own situation.

Goldstücker's views reflect both his faith in the ideals of his youth and the skepticism following his trial. It is apparent that he was more cautious following his imprisonment. As I show, archival evidence proves how closely Goldstücker was scrutinized by the secret police *after* his release.

The Archive of Security Forces

Goldstücker's caution is understandable in the light of the documents that I found in the Archive of Security Forces. Goldstücker's approach to Kafka must be understood both against the background of his continued Marxist convictions, and the secret police surveillance. The Archive of the Security Forces (Archiv bezpečnostních složek) in Prague provides evidence for the continued interest of the Secret Police (StB) in Goldstücker. According to the documents in the archive, the Czechoslovak Secret police (StB) closely monitored Goldstücker in the late 1950s and the beginning of the 1960s, and then again in the1970s. In October 1958, a file was opened

to monitor Eduard Goldstücker, under the title "GERMANISTA." (October 21, 1958)[106] The pretext was that Goldstücker was contacted by "a person from abroad."[107] The file was archived in the Ministry of Interior in 1962, and re-opened in October 25, 1971. The "Closing Report" is dated February 4th, 1981.

The StB set out to inquire about Goldstücker's "behaviour and his reputation in the place of his residence, his attitudes towards the system, his contacts, positioning of his apartment from the perspective of the act 103 or 52 (long-term tapping, short-term-tapping), etc." (30.9.1958, c.j. A/6-014814/20-58) [108] They attempted to find out whether he was an agent for "U.S. espionage agencies." In the same report from October 17th, 1958, Goldstücker is characterized as "living reclusively, as a result of his past." "Since that time he has been characterized as inapproachable, reclusive, confident, mistrustful, and somewhat vain." A report from January 1960 noted that Goldstücker was "still oriented adversely against the current system in ČSSR and against the Soviet Union. Allegedly, Goldstücker claimed that "in his core, he was, is, and will be a 'person with pro-Israeli sentiments who supports the ideology of the Israeli state."[109]

The reports demonstrate that Goldstücker was closely monitored by agents in his building and in his department at Charles University. The StB designed ways to test Goldstücker's loyalty by pretending to attempt to recruit him as a spy for them (the term used in the report is "falešná verbovka" – a false recruitment). The StB wanted to find out whether Goldstücker would report his meeting with the secret police to his wife. He did. Goldstücker and his wife were summoned

[106] Závěrečná zpráva akce "GERM" registration number 2946. The Czech word used is "rozpracování." All translations from the files are mine.
[107] 4/6 59746.
[108] 4/6 59746.
[109] 59746, 1.12.1960.

to the police under false pretences; in the meanwhile, a tapping device was installed in their apartment.

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, Goldstücker's trips abroad were closely monitored, as were his activities at Charles University: his contacts, his workload, and his popularity with his colleagues. Goldstücker was assessed for potential collaboration:

> Goldstücker proved himself as a cagey man, even fearsome, who doesn't have a good relationship to the Ministry of Interior because of the 'injustices', as he says, that he suffered in connection with his imprisonment in the Slánský action. For reasons of avoiding potential 'complications' in his life and so as not to have to come in contact with the organs of the Ministry of Interior, he called off the trip to the FRG." (59746)

In 1962, file #1693 was recommended for storage in the archive of the Ministry of Interior for ten years.

The next batch of archival documents attests to official interest in Goldstücker after his immigration to England. In October 1971, a „surveillance file" for Goldstücker was opened. The stated reason was that Goldstücker „was a former key representative of the right with connection to international Zionism." He is further characterized as a „foremost right-wing opportunist." (10.11. 1971) This file documents for example Goldstücker's role as the chairman of the Writers Union in 1968. The reports document his contacts, lifestyle, his reputation at the University of Sussex, and his political opinions about current events. The following was of interest to the secret police: Who met whom where, what opinions people represented, to what extent were they informed about political developments in Czechoslovakia, who was of Jewish origin, who brought messages to Czechoslovakia, which materials were sent, Goldstücker's contacts with

other exiled Czechs (e.g. the Paris based publisher Pavel Tigrid and the philosopher Karel Kosík), and his occupation as a lecturer in Brighton.

A document dated 22nd of April, 1969 reports about a BBC television program devoted to recent developments in Czechoslovakia against the background of the Slánský trials. The English commentators claimed that, „new trials cannot be excluded." Goldstücker and Evžen Löbl (another of the defendants in the Slánský trials) spoke on the program. According to the StB report, „very cautiously, they remarked that they were put under psychological pressure and false confessions were forced out of them."

According to another attached report from 1969, two Czech writers, Jan Otčenášek and Petr Pujman, met Goldstücker in England as representatives of the Writers Union to attempt to convince him to return to Czechoslovakia. According to the filed report „Professor Goldstücker categorically refused to discuss his return stating: ‚Boys, leave it, don't make it harder than it is.' The question is why, since both writers shared the same opinions about the evaluation of the overall situation, and still they did not fear to return. Was the cause Goldstücker's previous experience from the 1950s, or some other fears, for example his activities in 1968, his visibility in 1968, or his Jewish origin and the fear from new anti-Semitic persecution that were state policy at that time in Poland?" This gives us a unique insight into the presumptions that the Secret Police made about Goldstücker.

Document 59746 includes a very detailed biography of Goldstücker, since his studies at Charles University. Along with Jiří Hájek (the editor-in-chief of the literary magazine *Plamen*), Goldstücker organized „the first and second Kafka conference, which started the process of the

ideological destruction of Marxism-Leninism in Czechoslovakia.“ This judgment appeared also in normalization-era newspapers and was also quoted by Goldstücker in his various exilic articles about Liblice. The biography highlights events in Goldstücker’s life that the StB believed could serve to discredit him, such as Goldstücker’s denunciation of a German, Erich Walter-Forster, whom he accused before the Second World War of espionage against Czechoslovakia. It also pays a considerable attention to Goldstücker’s Zionist activities during the twenties. Another compromising circumstance, according to the anonymous author(s) of the biography, is Goldstücker’s involvement in the show trials. Remarkably for a document written by agents of the allegedly omniscient secret police, the report states, „the materials connected to the trial are currently inaccessible.“ Presumably, the document was written in a time of transition after the Soviet invasion when various organs of state were in flux and acted not just independently, but also against each other. The StB document assesses Goldstücker’s role in the trials, his role as the main witness for the prosecution in the Slánský trial, where he testified against Slánský and Clementis: „It is known that Goldstücker, Löbl and London’s situation abroad is made more difficult due to their testimony in the trials. Especially Goldstücker is afraid that this side of his activity in the trials will become a subject of criticism in Czechoslovakia and abroad. According to some reports, the widow of R. Margolius [Heda Kovaly who emigrated after 1968 to the U.S., VT] searched for documents about the trumped up testimony of Goldstücker and London against her husband. Goldstücker so far did not write a comprehensive material, as London and Löbl did, in which he would defend or explain his role in the trials. It seems, however, that he works on such a ‚piece.‘ Its name will be ‚Report for Karolina [his granddaughter VT].‘“

Goldstücker's Letter to the Minister of Interior

Another interesting archival document is a copy of Goldstücker's letter to the Minister of Interior of Czechoslovakia, which he sent from England on July 20, 1970. Goldstücker reacted to the rejection of his application to prolong his permission to stay in Great Britain until the end of the academic year. He summarized his attempts in the previous two years to return home in a way that would „allow for a reasonable hope for the minimal conditions for a bearable life in the midst of [his] family." (3) He summed up the propagandistic campaign against him following the Soviet invasion on August 21st, 1968, first in the foreign media and later in Czechoslovakia. A secret police colonel launched an attack on Goldstücker in *Rudé právo* (the daily newspaper of the Communist Party), which, according to Goldstücker, clearly showed that 1. The „defamatory, pogromist campaign" against those who participated in the democratization process before August 21st, was now adopted by the central organ of the Party; 2. The perpetrators, rather than the victims of the 1950s judicial trials, were now rehabilitated. (Goldstücker states that the colonel attempted to „justify the rehabilitation, not of the victims, but of the perpetrators of the judicial crimes of the 1950s.") Goldstücker concludes that those who were attacked cannot achieve justice.

In light of these circumstances, wrote Goldstücker, he decided to stay in England for another year and applied for the extension of his travel permit. „Later, however, I learned that my attempts were futile since the very beginning, because long before I submitted my application, my name appeared on the list of twenty-eight comrades, about whom it was decided on the highest level that measures should be taken against, in my case on the ground that I refuse to return. I state that nobody has asked me to return and therefore these reasons did not

correspond to truth. *But because it was once so authoritatively put on paper, it was necessary to make it true* (which is, incidentally, an expression of the captain of the StB Kohoutek during interrogations in Ruzyně prison in 1952), a task that was probably entrusted to your competence.“ (6, italics are mine) Goldstücker’s reasoning is very similar to that depicted by Škvorecký in his novel about the engineer who emigrated as a result of a rumor about his emigration. Goldstücker, as it emerges from the various reports, was cautiously waiting for the political situation in Czechoslovakia to become clarified; he tested the ground to see whether his personal safety could be guaranteed in the event of his return.

Goldstücker was well aware of the performative function of speech and the perverse twists it can assume in a totalitarian society. His eventual „decision“ not to return to Czechoslovakia only followed the prior judgment by the authorities about his alleged „intentions.“ The daily newspaper *Tribuna* called Goldstücker „an émigré“ several weeks before the decision of the Ministry not to allow him to stay abroad, a decision that, without the option to return, in fact turned him into an emigré. (8) Goldstücker reiterated a phrase used by the notorious captain Kohoutek, one of the main interrogators in the Slánský trial, to show how such practice of deciding the fates of people was common in Stalinist Czechoslovakia. A centralized-bureaucratic system that Goldstücker feared would be reinstated does not respect its own laws. It allows for mechanisms that produce persecutions, „from defamation to existential sanctions all the way to political trials in the style of the 1950s.“ (5)

Goldstücker repeated what he allegedly wrote in an earlier letter to the Ministry of Education: „Nobody will be surprised (...) that after my experiences from the 1950s I do not want to play the role of a whipping boy or a scapegoat, when the public declarations show that it

is the only role allowed to me“ (7). He perceived the rejection of his application an „act of discrimination against my person, a punishment without substantiated guilt.“ (7) Goldstücker was willing to compromise and to retire from his academic post to spend the rest of his life in the midst of his family in Czechoslovakia. But the growing hostility and propaganda signaled that he could not do that.

Goldstücker confessed in his memoir that at the time of his arrest and trial, the Party was the „biggest authority in his life.“ The letter to the minister, who represented the totalitarian system, shows that Goldstücker was revising, step by step, his attitude towards the „authority“ while not giving up the ideals of Communism. The last several pages are written in a lofty, elevated style and present Goldstücker‘s self-defense, as well as a declaration of his convictions: he is innocent, the truth is on his side, he will return home, if not alive, then his ashes will. He believes in his innocence. He draws a parallel between himself and the fifteenth-century Czech martyr, Jan Hus, and compares socialism with the council in Konstanz that sentenced Hus to death by immolation. Goldstücker’s sentence was exile. „You sentenced me without a trial and the sentence is exile.“ (10) The lofty rhetoric is strikingly inconsistent with Goldstücker‘s earlier statement that he wishes to live in privacy, without any aspiration to public activity and position, including academic; this option, he concluded, has been denied him.[110]

Goldstücker writes his letter as a public intellectual who conceives of his words and fate as still exerting some authority. He appeals to authorities, which are opaque; Goldstücker continues guessing what is precisely his situation vis-à-vis the current political circumstances; he

[110] This declaration starkly differs from the attitudes of the later dissidents, the signatories of the human rights movement Charter 77, for whom, inspired by the philosopher Jan Patočka, “life in truth” implied civic engagement.

tests the ground, engages in the same kind of strenuous and hopeless activity as Josef K. in the *Trial*, who in the course of the novel considers to take his case in his own hands and write his own "Verteidigungsschrift":

> Er wollte darin eine kurze Lebensbeschreibung vorlegen und bei jedem irgendwie wichtigern Ereignis erklären, aus welchen Gründen er so gehandelt hatte, ob diese Handlungsweise nach seinem gegenwärtigen Urteil zu verwerfen oder zu billigen war und welche Gründe er für dieses oder jenes ausführen konnte. (Kafka 2002b*,* 149)

Josef K. at one point takes a notebook to write a sketch, only to be interrupted by the bank's deputy director entering his room. Such writing would mean „eine endlose Arbeit," which is impossible to ever complete, because such undertaking would require that "das ganze Leben in den kleinsten Handlungen und Ereignissen in die Erinnerung zurückgebracht, dargestellt und von allen Seiten überprüft werden mußte." (Ibid, 170) Goldstücker does write his own defense, but his biography is penned by the anonymous StB. This peculiar document expresses the anonymous voice of the StB.

The secret police documents add a fascinating perspective that helps explain Goldstücker's attitudes. As we learn from the archival materials, his role as a witness against Slánský and Clementis made his situation problematic abroad. Speculations and constructions authored by anonymous secret police agents and officials about the ways Goldstücker might have felt – how he may have perceived the 1950s trials and how it might have influenced his behavior in the late 1950s as well as the early 1970s – provide an insight into the relationships between a perpetrator (the state power) and its victim. Moreover, Goldstücker's own continued public involvement (as a professor at Charles University in the 1950s and 1960s and as the president of the Writers Union in 1968 and Czech National Assembly, Česká národní rada 1968-

9), do not allow us to view him as just a victim. Contradictions pervade his situation. A martyr in his own eyes, he longed for private life. Particularly complex is his attitude towards Zionism: his youthful Zionist sympathies clashed with his Communist „internationalism", and the official anti-Israeli and openly anti-Semitic line since the Slanský trials. The Jewish origin of the defendants in the Slánský trials was emphasized (published in the Communist daily *Rudé právo* along with the sentences), and it was precisely Goldstücker's Jewish origin and his Zionist sympathies what the StB focused on in their surveillance.

Goldstücker's political attitudes and his precarious situation after his release from prison in the late 1950s explain his prevarications regarding Kafka. A 1964 article by the West German journalist Jochen Ziem „Kafka became a symbol of the suppressed word," from *Frankfurter Rundschau*[111] offers a contemporary evaluation from the other side:

> Eduard Goldstücker is today reproached that for two years he resisted publication of Western literature, in order to strengthen his newly acquired position of the professor of German at Charles University. The praxis of some publishers to distribute important literary works among critics who have good reputation, to organize reviews and affirmative campaign, so that the highest party echelons consider their publication necessary, was sabotaged by Goldstücker longer than was necessary for the safeguarding of his position. Only his work related to Kafka caused a change in him. It was Goldstücker who called forth a conference about Kafka last spring to Liblice, in which the German-speaking half-Czech was brought up from the underground of the prohibited literature and submitted to official discussion.

The writer, editor, and post-1989 diplomat Jiří Gruša who in 1964 interviewed Ziem for the journal *Tvář*, recalls the circumstances of Ziem's visit to Prague. Gruša was Goldstücker's son in

[111] Ziem (1964). This text, translated into Czech, forms a supplement to the report of the Censor's office Report No. 80 of June 1, 1964. This document was distributed among nine high officials, including Štrougal, Hendrych, Auersperg, Dubček, and others. Archiv bezpečnostních složek, Prague.

law and shared a household with him in the 1960s. [112] (Gruša 2004, 87) The StB intercepted his letters and the people which he mentioned in his letters and articles subsequently had problems. The article was not publicly available, yet it caused a huge stir.

> It was not possible to get the article, but the rumors about it were horrible. Goldstücker, to whom someone has read it over the phone, turned pale and I saw that he had fear, also on my behalf. The entire number of *Tvář* had to be pulped (...) The Party organization met and requested my self-criticism. (...) StB continued reading Ziem.“ (Gruša 2004, 91)

Both Goldstücker and Gruša considered Ziem an *agent provocateur*, albeit from opposing sides, right wing (West German) and left wing. (Gruša 2004, 94)

Whoever Ziem may have been, it does not discredit his claims. The philosopher and the author of early articles on Kafka Ivan Dubský (1957, 1958) told me that Goldstücker was hindering the publication of Kafka (fifty years later Dubský did not recall which text, merely that he read a review that did not recommend it for publication) only a short time before the conference.[113] The year 1963 may have been a turning point, as Ziem claimed as well. The political tide turned in 1963 with various manifestations such as the rehabilitation of the victims of the Slánský trials and Goldstücker’s receipt of an official acquittal (Goldstücker 2005, 75), which as the painter explains to K. in *The Trial*, is impossible. The tentative steps towards liberalization in 1963 were however accompanied by an increase in the „administrative pressure in the cultural realm.“ (Kocian, 2006)

[112] Gruša bases his discussion on the StB file kept for the journal *Tvář*. Gruša was one of its editors.
[113] I interviewed Ivan Dubský in Prague in the Spring of 2008.

The Reception of the Reception: Interpretations of Liblice

The significance of the Liblice conference has been disputed. It was celebrated by the participants such as Kusák and Goldstücker. In exile, Goldstücker emphasized the political agenda of the conference and valued it as a „small section of the struggle over the liberation of Marxism from Stalinist imprisonment and deformations." (Goldstücker 1984, 62) He repeatedly articulated the significance of the conference as the „spiritual Verdun"of the Cold War.[114] This assessment came often in the context of the scholar's reactions to the post-1968 condemnations of the event by DDR and Czechoslovak critics as heralding the „counter-revolution." Goldstücker highlighted the anti-Semitic nature of these condemnations. (Goldstücker 1984, 64-67)

The dissident sociologist Jiřina Šiklová, in her 1981 letter from prison, characterized the conference as the „interruption of long silence about this writer."[115] Some later critics valued highly the conference and the Kafka debate (e.g. French 1982, Bathrick 1995) as standing in for a debate over Modernism, which stood for much larger political and cultural conflict over change, reform and liberalization in Eastern Europe. The Liblice Conference has customarily been associated with the movement that attempted to reform Communism. „Embedded within the battles around Expressionism, Kafka or literary modernism in general were often fundamental issues concerning the maintenance or change off the political status quo." (Bathrick 1995, 70) The Czech historians Jiří Pernes and Oldřich Tůma commented recently on the

[114] „Auf den ersten Blick erscheint es absurd, dass Franz Kafka ins Kreuzfeuer des kalten Krieges geraten und sogar, wie wir in Prag Anfang der sechsiger Jahre zu sagen pflegten, zum geistigen Verdun jenes Krieges geworden ist." (Goldstücker 1984, 47),.

[115] More about Šiklová's letter in the chapter on Kafka in Samizdat. Šiklová's letter from the prison is quoted in Goldstücker, 1984, „Zehn Jahre nach der Liblice-Konferenz." 60.

differences in the reception of the Kafka conference in the East and in the West. While the West (e.g. the West Germans) have valued it as a symbolic event introducing liberalization to Czechoslovakia, Czech scholars have considered it one in a series of similar events – some of them of greater importance, such as new evaluations of some "Second Resistance" events, the recognition that not only Communists resisted the Nazi Occupation, the acceptance of broadening the historical categories from the bivalent Communist/Fascist ones and the ensuing Communist conclusion that if one was not the first, he must be the second.[116] Kafka as a German-writing author was more important to German scholars than to sixties generation Czechs who had reform-minded intellectuals of a younger generation to follow. These intellectuals judged the Liblice Conference harshly as a Marxist or even Communist intra-party debate which displayed no interest in Kafka's writing, but rather attempted to gain Kafka for the purposes of Communism. (Preisner 1977; Uhde 1990; Klaus 1994)

The Orthodox Marxist Response

President Novotný reports in his memoir that the Liblice conference was discussed in the Party Presidium:

> Only later, when we saw the international directing of the conference, an attempt to make it a highly political affair, which would suit the interests of the Czechoslovak revanchists, we wanted to stop it. Jiří Hendrych [the member of Politburo and the main ideologist, VT] was against it, and claimed that it would be received badly by the [international] world, where the conference was talked about a lot.

Novotný also credited the conference with negative influence on the Czechoslovak economy:

[116] Oldřich Tůma 's conference paper at the 2008 Liblice conference.

> The Kafka conference had a great impact on our economy [sic!]... Anti-Marxist opinions started to spread as snowfalls, and under their influence industrial development decreased [sic!] socialist accumulation decreased [sic!], and the party and state discipline weakened (...)“ (*pez*, 2003)

This is a typical example for the bizarre ideological discourse with preposterous assumptions and non-sequitur conclusions, characteristic of Communist propaganda, which was looking for any paranoid excuse to explain away the ever-present shortcomings of the command economy whether by blaming the “enemy within” during the 1950ies trials or the Kafka conference in the 1960s. It is interesting that this rhetoric is used here not in a newspaper article or other overt propaganda tool, but in Novotný’s memoir. The former president appears unable to release himself from this discourse even in a text that should be personal.

The introspective Kafka, with his self-doubts, sense of guilt, and insecurity, was the ultimate contrast to totalitarian heroism. Totalitarian aesthetics, going back perhaps all the way to Plato’s *Republic,* considers literature as depicting models for imitation. In the Czech Communist pantheon, Julius Fučík held a place of honor at the right-hand side of Klement Gottwald and Lenin. In their battle against pro-reform Marxists such Goldstücker, orthodox Marxists such as Pavel Reiman and even President Novotný used Fučík, as a counter-model to Kafka. Fučík, an important Communist symbol, became in this discourse a counter-figure to Kafka.

A Communist journalist and a member of the anti-Nazi resistance, he was caught, tortured, and executed by the Gestapo. According to the constructed Communist myth, Fučík remained silent during his interrogations. His (partially posthumously fabricated) book *Reportage Written on the Gallows* (*Reportáž psaná na oprátce*, 1943), which was smuggled

from prison on scraps of toilet paper, became – in its fabricated and codified version – a sacred text of sorts, allegedly the most translated Czech book. (Macura 1995, 281) Questions about the *Reportage's* authenticity were raised, and the text was fully explored after 1989 when the original manuscript became available to scholars. The text was censored under Communism to yield an unambiguous model of heroism. A section from the latter part of the book was eliminated in order to hide the fact that Fučík was talking during the interrogations (rather than remained silent, as would better befit the resistance hero). High Party functionaries decided to remove the compromising section and had control over all subsequent editions. During the Eighth Party Union in March 1946, Slánský summed up the message of the *Reportage*, including the heroism of the resistance fighter who refused to reveal any information during the interrogations; and so the Fučík myth was created. (Janáček 1995, 312-313) Macura noted that Fučík „successfully anticipated" the postwar value system as well as the specific socialist „poetics": He „offered to the ‚new era' of socialism an unambiguous, non-complicated type of a hero: young, strong (...), undefeatable, not ready to accept compromise, bound to the contemporary cult of youth and spring, welcoming the post-war and post-February chiliasm and the utopian, mythologizing perception of the present." (Macura 1995, 295) The Fučík „cult" reached its zenith in 1953, the year of Goldstücker's trial.[117]

Fučík's significance for Communist ideology is demonstrated for example by the role of his reportage in the show trials. In a *Rudé právo* (the newspaper of the Communist Party)

[117] The Fučík myth did not stand unchallenged during the early phases of Communism. Some expressed an astonishment that it was Fučík who was chosen to play the heroic role. (E.g. Ferdinand Peroutka) Fučík became a subject of investigation by the secret police in the 1950s, which demonstrates the fights within the various state offices. (Janáček 1995)

editorial, Slánský and the other defendants were accused of being „murderers of Jan Šverma[118] and Julius Fučík".[119] Fučík's concluding words (in their fabricated version, as the meaning significantly changed after a part of the text that preceded them was censored) were quoted also in the trial of Milada Horáková.[120] (Macura 1995, 296)

Fučík's *Reportage from the Gallows* was perceived as a „sacred text". (Macura 1995, 282) As a literary prophecy, it anticipated the world as it would be. (Macura 1995, 288) Fučík „clairvoyantly" anticipated this new world, and with his *Reportage* put himself in the midst of this world; he proposed himself to this new world as a hero to be honored. *Reportage* is both a hagiography and a testimony, like the gospels. Macura described how various non-sacred realms assumed qualities of hagiography in the post-baroque era. The „legendary subject" formed the background to the „martyrdom cult of the Czech writer, (Havlíček, Němcová, Tyl[121])" (Macura 1995, 294).

The orthodox Marxist attitude towards Kafka can be gleaned from the memoir of the Czechoslovak Communist President at the time, Antonín Novotný. He compared Franz Kafka to Fučík. The president wrote about Fučík:

> He lived for the Party, was courageous, almost headless; always took risks. In the Party Presidium I took the position that he should not be romanticized, I was convinced that the pathos around his legacy weakens his true significance. (Černý 1998-1999, 115)

---

[118] Jan Šverma (1903-1944) was another Communist hero of the WWII resistance.
[119] *Rudé právo*, November 28, 1952. In: Slánská 1990, 39.
[120] Milada Horáková (1901-1950), was a member of the Czechoslovak National Socialist Party, and a member of the Parliament until the Communist coup in February 1948. She was arrested in 1949, accused for being a leader of plot attempting to overthrow the Communist government, and tried in a first show trial modeled after the 1930s Soviet trials. She was executed in 1950.
[121] František Havlíček Borovský, Božena Němcová and Josef Kajetán Tyl were 19th century Czech writers and significant figures of the Czech National Revival.

Kafka, by contrast, subscribed according to Novotný to „the solution that in the critical situation in life, it is necessary to excuse every act, every expression of human weakness, as a fateful necessity (osudovou nevyhnutelnost).“ (*pez,* 2003) While Fučík bears a number of typically heroic traits such as courage and loyalty, he is an embodiment of „victory over loneliness.“ (Macura 1995, 295) Kafka is depicted as a coward, an embodiment of weakness, resignation, defeatism. Although Novotný refers to Kafka as a „Prague author of German nationality“, without mentioning his Jewish origin, it is interesting to consider whether it played a role in his condemnation (not necessary by Antonín Novotný, but perhaps by others.) The state media of course emphasized the „Jewish origin“, of the defendants in the Slánský trials.

Novotný commented on the way Kafka was used by „capitalist ideologues“ as a weapon against Socialism, a weapon of the imperialists against socialist realism. He reiterated the Marxist interpretation, according to which Kafka depicted alienation under capitalism, and alluded to a „capitalist“ reading of Kafka in which „a powerless man [was] subjected to the apparatus of merciless and blind forces of the governing Communist Party.“ His language echoes that of Jean Paul Sartre who, in his Moscow speech, dismissed the use of the author as a „weapon“ in the Cold War.

> Kafka depicted alienation under capitalism. (...) The capitalist ideologues did not apply his criticism to them, but made of it a weapon against socialism. (...) They constructed ‚Kafka theory‘ about the powerlessness of a man who falls under the wheels of the apparatus of the merciless and blind forces of the current governing Communist Party. (...) They wanted to take away from the young generation Fučík, a clear example of a modern revolutionary, whom they substituted with Kafka, a clear image of resignation (...) (*pez*, 2003)

Kafka and Fučík embody resignation vs. revolution, powerlessness vs. heroic courage. While Fučík was a saint and a martyr, an immortal hero, a revolutionary directed towards the utopian future, Kafka was a figure of the past, a historical phenomenon without any significance for the present.

Paul Reiman, one of the leading figures of the 1963 conference, in his opening paper „Kafka und die Gegenwart," also contrasted Kafka with Fučík, demonstrating that the juxtaposition had a deep resonance still in the early 1960s. As with all utterances in the conference, this statement needs to be considered in terms of its political usefulness. It is obvious that such rhetoric was instrumental in presenting Kafka publicly, whether or not the speaker was himself convinced of such a comparison. Reiman dismissed Kafka and quoted from Fučík:

> Um diese Aufgabe zu lösen, um den Sinn unseres Lebens zu erfüllen, dazu brauchen wir eine andere Literatur als Kafka, eine Literatur, von deren Ziel und Sendung Julius Fučík in den unvergeßlichen Worten seiner letzten Reportage sprach: *Und noch einmal wiederhole ich: wir haben für die Freude gelebt, für die Freude sind wir in den Kampf gegangen und für sie werden wir sterben. Deshalb möge nie Trauer mit unserem Namen verbunden sein.* (Reiman 1966, 20)

Reiman's perspective is similar to that of president Novotný; he judged the writer politically by juxtaposing Kafka's „Defaetismus" and „Trauer" with Fučík's „Freude," „Leben," and „Kampf". Like the East German delegates, Reiman perceived Kafka's relevance exclusively in historical and social terms: „Wir schätzen Kafka als Schriftsteller, der ehrlich die Wahrheit suchte, aber im Kampf um den Aufbau einer neuen Gesellschaft bleiben wir der Orientierung Fučíks treu, gehen wir den Weg des Lebens, der Freude." (Reiman 1966, 20)

Demetz commented on the „metaphysical nature", of the interpretations put forth by what he terms the „Prague Marxist dissidents" of the 1960s, who claimed that Kafka anticipated

capitalist alienation. According to Demetz, these interpretations were „not less metaphysical than Max Brod's theological interpretation of the twenties." (Demetz 2004) More liberal Marxist thinkers, such as Goldstücker (probably one of Demetz's "Prague Marxist dissidents"), fought a cautious battle against the more conservative, Stalinist and post-Stalinist orthodox positions of the late 1950s and 1960s, and also against the dogmatic line represented by some of the GDR delegates in line with the official East German position. This struggle took place within the larger context of the debate over socialist realism at the close of the 1950ies. The more orthodox Marxists considered writers entirely reducible to their class origins, and hence non-working class writers could not be of any value. Lukács claimed that the battle is fought within capitalism or bourgeois ideology as well as between socialism and capitalism, and hence a „bourgeois writer" can find a „way out from the ideological crisis of the bourgeois society." (Lukács 1958, 84)[122]

Novotný and Reiman's judgments of Kafka as a „defeatist" resemble the rhetoric of Lukács, who introduced the category of decadent „Avant-gardism," which he contrasted with „Critical Realism." Lukács's typology forms the background to the realism debate and discussion at the background to the Liblice conference.[123] In his essay, „Wider den mißverstandenen Realismus" (1957), Lukács contrasted Kafka against Thomas Mann and used him as the paradigmatic case of avant-garde literature. Lukács described Kafka as a decadent, individualistic writer who was incapable of transcending his personal fears and loneliness.

[122] This debate was followed in Czech journals like Plamen e.g. Miroslav Drozda, "Nové hlasy o socialistickém realismu." *Plamen* 3/59. 342-349. This article summarizes the international debate in a Moscow congress of Slavists in 1958, in journals Nova mysl, and Neue deutsche Literatur. See also Hans Kaufmann's, *Neue deutsche Literatur* article discussed in the essay „Proti socialistickému realismu?", Plamen, 4/1960.

[123] Lukács's position on Kafka is referred to in Liblice for example by the GDR speaker Klaus Hermsdorf or, more critically by Alexej Kusák (Kusák 1966, 173-174)

Kafka, according to Lukács, embodied „die Angst als Konzentrat der ganzen modernen dekadenten Kunst." (Lukács 1958, 37) Lukács described Kafka's atheism with attributes such as „Herrschaft der Trostlosigkeit des Lebens, der Sinnlosigkeit aller menschlichen Zielsetzungen"; Kafka was „Irrlicht," imbued with the „prophetic fear" (prophetische Angst). A contemporary bourgeois author must decide between Kafka and Mann; on the human level, the decision is between the „eternalization" of the fear and overcoming it.

Following its association with the reform movement, the conference was condemned by the post-1968 normalization regime. In September 1968, the GDR journal *Neues Deutschland* published three articles by Kurt Zimmermann who identified the „spiritual forerunners of the counter-revolution" (die geistigen Vorreiter der Konterrevolution); Goldstücker and the Kafka conference were among them. Similar judgment was echoed in the reports kept by the Secret Police with articles from *Tvorba* and *Rudé právo*. Goldstücker's detailed biography, contained in the StB file from 1974 and compiled by the StB, characterizes Goldstücker as a co-organizer (with Jiří Hájek) of the first and second Kafka conference, which „started the process of the ideological destruction of Marxism-Leninism in Czechoslovakia."[124]

Western Response

In his articles from the 1970s, Goldstücker (1984b)[125] quoted dismissive judgments of the conference as „ein wichtiger Markstein für den wachsenden Einfluß revisionistischer und bürgerlicher Ideologie." (Goldstücker 1984b) By emphasizing the subversive quality of the

[124] "Vyhodnocení činnosti a styků Eduarda Goldstückera." January 12, 1973 (59746). Archiv bezpečnostních složek.
[125] This article was originally published in *Die Zeit*, Nr. 35, August 24th, 1973, 40.

event, he contributed to the formation of subsequent Western reception of the conference as a major event of the reform movement. The conference became equated with the rehabilitation of Kafka, which in turn was viewed as „a test for the policy of opening the windows to enlightened currents from Western Europe," a „test of de-Stalinization in Prague..." (French 1982, 178-179)

While in the official East, Kafka was deemed a bourgeois decadent, in the West he was largely perceived as a prophet of Stalinism and totalitarianism. This Western evaluation was not imposed from a hierarchical center, and so there would be exceptions, but this was still the dominant received view, as it were. The non-differentiated ideological perception of the West in Czechoslovakia was thus complemented by an ideological reading of Kafka and view of the East in the West. The West Germans had only a vague notion of the contemporary or historical situations in Eastern Europe. There was a great deal of forgetting of multicultural and multi-ethnic pre-World War II Central Europe. Having never lived in a Communist society, though having some experience of living in a totalitarian society that they wished to forget, West Germans conceived Prague as dark and impenetrable, and they reduced their vision of it to the Prague German authors and the world long lost.[126] Klaus Wagenbach's study about Kafka's early years from 1951-1957 (published in 1958) was the first work by a Western scholar to deal with the demographic, social, and historical conditions of Kafka's Prague.

For many West German and West European critics, Kafka became a synecdoche for Prague/ Eastern Europe. After the Liblice Conference, some scholars and journalists traveled to Prague to "experience" the place where Kafka spent most of his life. (E.g. Marthe Robert who

[126] Alena Wágnerová, „Kafka und die Macht – ein Thema mit Variationen unter Einbeziehung eigener Erfahrung". Conference paper *Kafka und die Macht*, Liblice 2008.

published her essay in *Monat*) Goldstücker was one of the mediators. He traveled extensively in the 1960s in Western Europe, and was welcomed as a sort of messenger from behind the Iron Curtain, a symbolic figure that suited Western liberal expectations: a Jew from Prague who became a victim of Stalinism, but held fast to his Marxist ideals. It did not matter that Goldstücker was not originally a *Prague* German Jew, but came from Slovakia, nor did it matter that his status as a victim was complicated and ambiguous because he had been a member of the Communist establishment till his arrest, and because he agreed albeit under severe coercion to bear false witness against other Jewish Communist leaders who were consequently executed. As in the case of other Communist victims of purges like Trotsky or Bukharin, it would have been easy for European Marxist and fellow travelers to consider him a humanist and idealist Communist and believe that only had Communism been led by better educated, more humane, less brutal, and more cosmopolitan characters, it could have all turned out better.

It is not clear to what extent people at the time knew about Goldstücker testimony for the prosecution in the trials. If the Secret Police report is to be believed, Goldstücker himself was afraid that it would become well known. Still, most people who knew about the Slánský trials in the 1960s probably learned about them from Artur London's popular memoirs *L'Aveu*, which were adapted into a popular French movie directed by Costa-Garves with Yves Montand in the title role. I doubt he would have been judged too harshly given the wide belief in "brainwashing" techniques at the time.

It is apparent that Goldstücker suited the need of West Germans for their own *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*. As Alena Wágnerová suggested,[127] the interpretation of Kafka in West Germany functioned as „ein raffinierter Verdrängungsmechanismus," in their dealing with the Holocaust.[128] This is a compelling argument, as Kafka was also read as a prophet of right wing totalitarianism and Nazism, as I discussed earlier. Yet the Germans who were using Kafka, did not seek to legitimize Nazism or their past involvement with it if any. Rather, they were seeking to prove that they are not Nazi or totalitarian thinkers by endorsing the most visible cultural symbol of anti-totalitarian thinking and critique, and a Jew from Prague.

Criticism of Liblice and Goldstücker by non-Marxist Scholars and Writers

Any discussion of the Liblice Conference would be incomplete without a presentation of opinions that viewed critically the debate between the less and more orthodox Marxists. Czech authors in exile such as Rio Preisner and Josef Škvorecký dismissed in the 1970s and 1980s the conference as a Marxist affair. The younger critic Přemysl Blažíček (1932-2002) in 1965 criticized Goldstücker's writing for what he considered ideologically tainted approach to literature. Unlike the more liberal Marxist perspective, which was relatively well documented, the non-, not to say anti- Marxist perspective, has not been included in any of the existing assessments of the conference.

This criticism of Liblice has its roots in liberalized Czechoslovakia of the 1960s. Blažíček criticized Goldstücker's 1963 position towards Kafka in a review published in the

[127] Ibid.
[128] Joseph Vogl in an interview I conducted with him in May 2008 in Berlin suggested that Kafka was used by some West German scholars with a Nazi past as a way to rehabilitate themselves.

journal *Tvář.*[129] (Blažíček 1965) He reviewed Goldstücker's 1964 anthology *Na téma Franz Kafka* as well as his epilogues to the Czech translations of the collection of Kafka's short stories and the *Castle* (both published in 1964). Blažíček criticized Goldstücker's „symbolic-allegorical" interpretation of Kafka's work, according to which the prose „indirectly expresses something that could be expressed directly. " (Blažíček 1995, 53) According to this method, Kafka's stoker is not a stoker, but the symbol of the working class, while the ship is a symbol of society. Goldstücker values Kafka's ability to perceive „more than the others," the dehumanization of technical society, bureaucratization, etc. Blažíček criticized that in Goldstücker's view, the meaning of Kafka's work lies in its ability to depict and critique his historical condition, while according to Blažíček, the social-historical circumstances are among many other external conditions for the work. They may be reflected in the work, but they are not the work's message (výpověď). Second, Blažíček criticizes that in Goldstücker's view, the work is merely the mean for understanding the „ideological formation of the author." In Goldstücker's reading, Kafka's prose is evidence for his struggle to forge a closer relationship to the working class. Blažíček quoted Goldstücker's view of Kafka: „It must be stated that Kafka's psychological make up as well as his curriculum vitae reveal decadent features. Decrease of life energy, insufficient ammunition to successfully manage contemporary life conditions (...)" In Kafka, according to Goldstücker, we can observe the „transfer of life activity from a practical act into the realm of contemplation and artistic creation." Blažíček points out that Goldstücker's interest is not that of a literary scholar, he is rather interested in politics and cultural politics.

[129] *Tvář* („Face" in Czech) was a journal of mostly young critics and writers, published under the auspices of the Union of Czechoslovak Writers . Václav Havel was one of its editors. *Tvář* was published from 1964 to 1965 and from the Fall 1968 to the Summer of 1969.

(Blažíček 1995, 55) Blažíček's critical review is an indirect dismissal of the method of socialist realism, whether its more orthodox, or "dogmatic," or the more reform, version.[130]

Blažíček argues that Goldstücker's approach was shared by other academics that appeared progressive in the early 1960s, but their approach to literature still adhered to the requirements of socialist realism, despite some minor refinements. The academics that Blažíček scrutinized were all rooted in the 1950s: they viewed art as a direct reflection of social reality. Blažíček concluded his article by pointing out that the four academics whose works he analyzed were „below average", yet their authority as heads of departments at Charles University was disproportionally high.

> It is apparent that the universities with their relative isolation and their strict system of awarding titles conserve the cadre composition, as it was established in the 1950s. (...) precisely the institution which determines the future spiritual level, became a rigid monument to the past. (Blažíček 1995, 59)

Blažíček criticized the a priori, ideological standpoint of authors such as Goldstücker, characteristic of the conservative values and methods established in the 1950s and prevailing in Czech academic institutions.

Blažíček published his critique in the journal *Tvář*, which represented the views of younger authors, critical of the political and cultural status quo. Among the editors of the journal were Václav Havel as well as already above mentioned Jiří Gruša, Emanuel Mandler, Jan Lopatka, and Bohumil Doležal; the circle of contributors included Přemysl Blažíček, Věra Linhartová, Rio Preisner, Zbyněk Hejda – to name those who will be discussed further. Kafka

[130] Miroslav Drozda, "Nové hlasy o socialistickém realismu." *Plamen* 3/59. 342-349. This article summarizes the international debate in a Moscow congress of Slavists in 1958, in journals *Nova mysl*, and *Neue deutsche Literatur*.

was important for a younger generation of 1960s authors who read him, to put it broadly, as the embodiment of a non-ideological approach to literature.[131] As the symbol of non-ideological literature, „being outside of political propaganda," Kafka became "Inbegriff des nichtideologisierten, außerhalb der politischen Propaganda stehenden Seins, zum Vertreter der nichtmanipulierten Kunst" (Václavek 1994, 149) in the Soviet block, a critical figure for the self-identification of Czech writers mostly of the younger generation. Kafka's work or the perception thereof exerted a strong influence on literature, theatre and the visual arts.

The influence of Kafka and the rejection of ideology are reflected in the aesthetic choices of Czech authors such as the playwrights Václav Havel and Josef Topol, the experimental prose writer Věra Linhartová, the authors of concrete poetry Josef Hiršal & Bohuslava Grögrová, and the author of the quasi-diary prose (and Kafka translator) Jan Hanč, to name just a few. Havel's 1960s plays *The Garden Party* and *The Memorandum* are indebted also to Ionesco and Beckett; it is Kafka, though, who exerted the strongest influence on Havel's plays. The direct references include Havel's eponymous doubles, as well as long analytical monologues of the main characters, a transposition of Kafka's *erlebte Rede* on stage, which thematize dissolution of identity, totalitarian language, and the pervasive power mechanisms. The aesthetic approaches of works influenced by Kafka are diverse. There are a number of explicit intertextual relationships to Kafka in Linhartová's experimental prose. Hanč's quasi-diaries epitomize the desire for authenticity that can be opposed to the empty, inauthentic Construction Novel promoted by socialist realism, and present an interesting parallel to Kafka's diaries. Havel's plays share many motifs with Kafka's novels, while the motif of mask and

[131] See also my discussion of Ivan Martin Jirous and his transcript copies of Kafka's texts in the early 1960s, in the chapter on Kafka in Czech Samizdat.

unmasking (which, as I discuss below, Goldstücker found in Kafka's literary method) is crucial for Topol's play *Konec masopustu* (*The End of Carnival*, 1963).

Tvář espoused an understanding of literature strongly opposed to the ideologically tainted literature of socialist realism, the only permissable aesthetic ideology after 1948. Tvář published several articles about Kafka, among them by Rio Preisner (1965). One of its editors, Emanuel Mandler, wrote prose strongly influenced by Kafka. In context of our discussion of Kafka, it is interesting to note the position the critic Bohumil Doležal (1995) and the poet Zbyněk Hejda (1995), on avant-gardes, most notably Surrealism, as well as the neo-avant-gardes of the 1960s. They argued that the avant-gardes were based on faulty, ideological principles. In their view, the avant-gardes based their beliefs on misconceived notions about art and creativity by conflating art with politics, technology and science. The critics dismissed the movements' premise of the collective nature of art and claimed that art and creativity flourish only in solitude.[132] (These Czech critics may have had a reductive understanding of the avant-gardes, based on their extreme experience of the abuse of art for political purposes.)

Tvář was way too liberal first under the conditions of slow and moderate liberalization process and second under the Soviet occupation regime. It was closed down twice: in 1965 (the publication stopped 1-1-1966) and then for good in 1969. Goldstücker was the chairman of the Writers' Union in April 1968 when the possibility of the journal's renewal was discussed. He expressed his critical opinion about the journal during the meeting; his words give a good insight into Goldstücker's political standpoint as he was talking during the zenith of political reform in the Prague Spring, after censorship was abolished. The journal, which was supposed to be a

[132] Both articles were published in the collection edited by the *Tvář* editors, *Podoby II*, 1969.

platform for young writers, „became something entirely different.“ It started „shooting on the progressive front from the side and complicated the situation.“ Goldstücker referred to the criticism directed against him (apparently Blažíček's review discussed above):

> I don't say it because I was attacked there, but state objectively that by its further existence, *Tvář* complicated attempts of the progressive literary and intellectual front (...) *Tvář* was aware that the opinions it presented cannot be publically subjected to criticism, because all such criticism would constitute a danger that it will initiate administrative intervention against *Tvář.* Aware of such immunity, it practiced its attacks and criticism, with the knowledge that no target of those attacked will be able to respond. (Špirit 1995, 582-583)

Goldstücker remained tactical to the end.

In the 1970s and 1980s, criticism of the Liblice conference was carried on in exile. Two important writers who emigrated after 1968 commented on the Liblice Conference: the scholar and translator of Kafka Rio Preisner (1925-2007), who wrote about Kafka for *Tvář* and translated Kafka's *Aphorisms* (published 1968), and the writer Josef Škvorecký. Škvorecký acknowledged that the Kafka conference „placed Kafka into the focus of literary, and to some degree political interest,“ and that Kafka's works started being published following the conference. (Škvorecký 1974, 1983) But he then corrected the accepted view by pointing out that Czech readers had become acquainted with Kafka much earlier, in the journal *Světová literatura*, where Škvorecký, in the position of deputy editor-in-chief, helped to publish Kafka‘s story “Der Bau,” along with a study by Pavel Eisner, in 1957.

Rio Preisner launched a furious attack on “Liblice” in the early 1970s. Preisner dismissed the event as a Marxist inter-party or even intra-party debate and argued that rather than an indication of liberalization, the Marxists „stole“ Kafka in order to prove they were liberalizing.

In fact they would go on repressing a host of other authors. According to Preisner, it would be wrong to consider the Liblice conference as a sign of thaw:

> Die Konferenz in Liblice als ein günstiges Zeichen des Tauwetters auf dem Gebiet der Kultur aufzufassen, könnte zu einer tiefgreifende Verwechslung führen. Während aus propagandistischen Gründen gestattet wurde, über Kafka, vorwiegend jedoch über den Kafkismus, unverbindlich zu plaudern, wurden alle Versuche, die Werke von Peguy, Bernanos, Hopkins, Eliot, Pound, Broch, Werfel u.a., und natürlich auch die Werke tschechischer Autoren wie Jaroslav Durych, Jan Zahradníček, Jakub Deml, Richard Weiner (...) rücksichtslos unterdrückt, oft unter aktivem Einsatz der parteitreuen Organisatoren einer ganzen Reihe von Symposien. (Preisner 1977, 17)[133]

Preisner showed the limits of liberalization in the mid-1960s, when a number of authors, among them Jiří Kolář, Jan Hanč, some Catholic and exilic authors, as well as Surrealists, were still prohibited. (cf. Kosková, 2000) Preisner further argued that the Czechs confused Kafka with „Kafkismus," a sociological phenomenon that substituted for critical, or in fact any real reading of Kafka: „Zugespitzt könnte man sagen: je weniger Intellektuelle in Böhmen Kafkas Werk wirklich kannten, desto wilder entfaltete sich ihr Kafkismus." (Preisner 1977, 16) The Prague author, claimed Preisner, was "terra incognita" to the Czech Structuralists, nor was he known by the Czech and German *Germanistik* before 1945. He was not read by the left-leaning Czech avant-garde of the 1920s and 1930s that was strongly influenced by French Surrealism. This statement is certainly controversial: the *Castle* was published in 1935 by the Art Association Mánes (with the cover image by the foremost Surrealist Toyen), which attests to the Surrealist reception of Kafka at the time. A psychoanalytical essay by Zbyněk Havlíček is another example of an active reception in the 1950s. As for the 1960s, hardly any other author made such an

[133] Jaroslav Durych, Jan Zahradníček and Jakub Deml were Czech catholic authors, Richard Weiner represents Czech expressionism.

impact on prose, theatre, and film, as did Kafka. Rather than ignoring Kafka's impact (for example he noted the intertextuality in the prose by Věra Linhartová), Preisner dismissed it by claiming that Kafka was not understood by his Czechs readers.

Positions such as Blažíček's were echoed after 1989 when the discussion over the Liblice Conference resumed in the press. The conference was dismissed by the Minister of Culture after 1990, Milan Uhde, and the president since 2003 Václav Klaus (the economist Klaus contributed to *Tvář* during the1960s), and Bohumil Doležal. Doležal's criticism is close to that of Blažíček, whose article I discussed above. Doležal, once one of the key critics of *Tvář*, dismissed the 1960s attempts of reformists such as Goldstücker to interpret literary works in such a way that they would be „acceptable to the ideologists of ‚socialist humanism,'" to manipulate the works so that they "get along," with the „governing ideology." (Doležal 1994) Doležal wrote about *Tvář*, referring to the closing of the journal: „Programmatically we did not accept the socialist ideological cliché as the binding framework and rather attempted to understand literature from within. Even that, of course, was political in its own sense, and within a year they prohibited us." (Doležal 1994)

Goldstücker's *Memoir*

Since Goldstücker's memoir was published in 1989, he clearly wrote it before the end of Communism in Europe while in exile and could not have had a domestic Czech non-exile audience in mind. Goldstücker entitled his 1989 memoir *Prozesse*, and the two chapters, which

depict his arrest and interrogations, „Die Metamorphose“ and „Der Prozess“ in clear reference to Kafka.

„Die Metamorphose“ describes „Verwandlung des Bürgers Goldstücker in den ‚Verbrecher‘ Goldstücker.“ (Goldstücker 1989, 205) This metamorphosis happened at the moment of the arrest. „At the moment of my arrest I was excommunicated, because once someone was arrested, it meant he became a criminal.“ (Goldstücker 2005, 69) The chapter also describes various, often ominous, events that preceded Goldstücker's arrest. In 1951, Goldstücker was about to assume a diplomatic position in Sweden, but his departure was postponed on various unexplained grounds: his personnel did not receive passports, and Goldstücker was sent for three weeks to a sanatorium. The appointment in Sweden was cancelled and instead he was appointed Professor for German literature at Charles University in Prague. He lived temporarily in a hotel, as the assignment of the apartment that was promised to him, was delayed „aus rätselhaften Gründen,“ his dossier moved from one office to another. Shortly after Slánský was arrested on November 23rd, Goldstücker remarked during a visit to a friend that the Central Committee's opinion about Slánský as the head of „trotzkistisch-zionistische Verschwörung,“ as well as some other declarations (on Zionism etc), were anti-Semitic.

> Noch ehe ich den Satz zu Ende bringen konnte, wandte Taufer sich mir zu und maß mich mit einem schrägen Blick. In diesem kurzen Augenblick war ich vom Genossen zu einer Person geworden, die mit Mißtrauen zu betrachten war.“ (Goldstücker 1989, 210)

Goldstücker used the passive voice to describe the events that preceded his arrest, events that increasingly assumed ominous meaning when viewed through the prism of later developments.

Still, Goldstücker did not expect his arrest in December 1951. It happened in late afternoon. Goldstücker was awoken from sleep by three men: awaiting a friend, he „schlief seltsamerweise sogar ein.“ (Goldstücker 1989, 211) He recalled his arrest:

> Sind Sie Eduard Goldstücker, geboren in Podbiel am 30.5. 1913? bellte mich der am nächsten Stehende an. Als ich bejahte, murmelte er geradezu gelangweilt die Verhaftungsformel und förderte mich auf, den Mantel anzuziehen.“ (Goldstücker 1989, 211)

As they drove him through Prague towards the prison, one of the agents pulled over his eyes „etwas wie eine riesige Brille,“ which, paradoxically, prevented him from seeing.

The formulation used to arrest people is a typical example of a speech-act: ‚die Verhaftungsformel‘ transforms a person into an accused. In a totalitarian system, an arrest transforms a person into a criminal because no due process according to the rule of law can be expected. Since the state decided that somebody is guilty, that person is arrested and of course will be convicted in due course. Similarly, the last chapter of the *Trial* (which ends with the execution) is complementary to the first: the punishment is already implied by the act of arrest. There are several similarities between Goldstücker’s description of his arrest and the first and last chapters of *The Trial*. Like K., Goldstücker was in bed when he was „attacked.“ The agents asked him to take a coat. Goldstücker later described the prison uniform that he received after he was searched: „Einen verwaschenen und durchgewetzten Trainingsanzug aus Sackleinen, eine lange Unterhose, ein Hemd ohne Knöpfe und Filzpantoffeln,“ rags that fall from his body when he moves. (Goldstücker 1989, 212) These miserable clothes contrast with the meticulous care that Goldstücker normally gave to his attire, which was perceived with suspicion — one of the

complaints against him before the arrest was that Goldstücker „has bourgeois manners, always wears a white handkerchief in his pocket.“ (Goldstücker 1989, 69)

Although arrested, Josef K. lives his daily life as before. He dresses carefully on the morning of his arrest. Both K. and Goldstücker expected someone else when came the uninvited „guests“: Goldstücker awaited his friend and assumed it was him when he heard knocks on the door. The reader does not witness K.'s arrest; he is merely informed that K. was "eines Morgens verhaftet.“ (Kafka 2002b, 7) In the last chapter, K. did not await the two men; he was nevertheless dressed and ready to receive them. „K. gestand sich ein, daß er einen andern Besuch erwartet hatte.“ (Ibid,, 305) The two guards in *The Trial* steal K's breakfast and are tempted to take his linings (Wäsche). Also Goldstücker relates a theft: „Einer der drei blieb in meinem Zimmer und stahl dort alles, was nur irgendwie von Wert war.“ (Goldstücker 1989, 212) The atmosphere of unclarity pervades both scenes; the ambiguous „awaiting“ of the uninvited guests, as well as physical conditions, amplifies the uncertainty. Dusk and darkness are the conditions in both scenes (Goldstücker's arrest and the last chapter of *The Trial*); the difficulties in visual perception are characteristic both for Kafka's hero and for the narrator in Goldstücker's memoir. It was dusk in K.'s room when the two executioners came for him, he seemed to notice Fräulein Bürstner as they walked in the street, but was not certain of her identity. Spatial confusions complement the visual and temporal. Goldstücker, when driven to Ruzyně prison, is given monstrous spectacles that make him blind and he tries to guess where the car drives him; the familiar city turns into a labyrinth. The huge spectacles that prevent from seeing are a grotesque element that could find its place in Kafka's prose the effect of which often rests on disproportionality and the unexpected. All officials display lack of enthusiasm: the men who

came to arrest Goldstücker are bored, while Josef K. perceives his two executioners, with some contempt, as „alte untergeordnete Schauspieler.“ (Ibid, 306)

In Kafka's *The Trial,* the reader is informed of Josef K's arrest in the first sentence: „Jemand mußte Josef K. verleumdet haben, denn ohne daß er etwas Böses getan hätte, wurde er eines Morgens verhaftet.“ (Ibid, 7) The formula, „die Verhaftungsformel“, is not pronounced; the reader does not witness the arrest. K's situation is alluded to later on: „Sie dürfen nicht weggehn, Sie sind ja gefangen.“ ‚Es sieht so aus“, sagte K. Und warum denn?“ fragte er dann. „Wir sind nicht dazu bestellt, Ihnen das zu sagen. Gehn Sie in Ihr Zimmer und warten Sie. Das Verfahren ist nun einmal eingeleitet und Sie werden alles zur richtigen Zeit erfahren.“ (Ibid, 9) Also the two *Wächter* (Franz and Willem) who appear in Josef K's apartment do not indicate on what grounds he is arrested.

The first sentence provides information both of Josef K's arrest as well as his innocence („Jemand mußte Joseph K. verleumdet haben“). Joseph K. is arrested „ohne daß er etwas Böses getan hatte.“ The events of the novel – including the execution at the end – proceed as if he is guilty, although he never learns what is his transgression, what constitutes his guilt, and to some extent continues to live his daily life. Goldstücker, like other prisoners of totalitarian systems, was not told the reason for his arrest. He writes how he inquired about the reason at the beginnings of the interrogation: „... wagte ich zu fragen, welches Vergehen man mir zur Last legte, worauf Kohoutek antwortete: ‚Das sagen nicht wir Ihnen, sondern Sie uns. (...) geben Sie sich also keinen Illusionen hin, daß Sie es am Ende nicht doch sagen werden.“ (Goldstücker 1989, 213) The Czechoslovak officials followed the methods established in revolutionary Russia: the admission of guilt was sufficient for passing a judgment. (Goldstücker 2005, 69) „The second

principle was to treat the arrested as a criminal from the very beginning (...)“ (Goldstücker 2005, 69) Breaking the will of the victim was an important part of the investigation and the trial, along with the confession and memorizing the scripted answers. This performance, as were the political trials as such, served diverting the attention of the general population from the failings of the system. This claim is made by Goldstücker (Liehm 1968a) in an interview in *Slovenské pohl'ady*.

Are the similarities between Goldstücker's narrative and Kafka's novel mere coincidences, or are there direct intertextual relationships between Goldstücker's narration and Kafka's novel? Did Goldstücker narrate his life through reading Kafka, or was there a genuine similarity between the two?

At least initially, Goldstücker hesitated to connect his experiences with Kafka‘s novel, although this connection was made by others. (E.g. Liehm 1968) Slavoj Žižek drew an explicit connection between the Stalinist purges and *The Trial*. Žižek compared the trial of Bukharin with Kafka's *The Trial*, ascribing to the novel the power of mimesis. (Žižek 2001) In his last speech before the Central Committee on February 23, 1937, Bukharin said that he would not commit suicide in order not to harm the Party; the laughter that erupted among the audience had, according to Žižek, an eerie, „Kafkaesque quality.“ (Ibid, 102) This laughter „hinges on the radical discord between the speaker's utter seriousness (...) and the reaction of the Central Committee members.“ (Ibid, 102) Žižek compared Bukharin's speech to the first interrogation of

Josef K. and the laughter that erupts when K. replies that he is a bank manager to the question of whether he is a house painter.

Bukharin publicly confessed his guilt in order to help the Party but continued to insist on his innocence in front of Stalin. „What causes Bukharin such trauma is not the ritual of his public humiliation and punishment, but the possibility that Stalin might really believe the charges against him." (Ibid, 107) Bukharin accepted the Bolshevik prerogative, that the needs of the collective must be placed above the needs of the individual. Bukharin was ready to „plead guilty in public if the Party needed his confession, but he wanted it to be made clear in the inner circle, among his comrades, that he was not really guilty, but merely agreed to play the necessary role in the public ritual. This, precisely, the Party could not grant him: the ritual loses its performative power the moment it is explicitly designated as a mere ritual." (Ibid, 108-109) Those accused in the Stalinist trials were innocent of the deeds that were attributed to them, but guilty in a "deeper" sense: they did not commit the crimes that they were accused of, but they were guilty in the eyes of the Party in that they attempted to maintain some personal autonomy, authenticity, and human weakness. (Ibid, 110)

Žižek's witty observation that „it is not the accused who are tormented by the Party, it is the Party leadership that is tormented by those who refuse to confess their crimes" (Ibid, 109) is reminiscent of the strange rhetoric of the law in *The Trial*: „Unsere Behörde (...) sucht doch nicht etwa die Schuld in der Bevölkerung, sondern wird wie es im Gesetz heißt von der Schuld angezogen und muß uns Wächter ausschicken." (Kafka 2002b, 14) The Communist purges did not display the humor and irony of Kafka's language. The Communist state did actively „search for the guilt" in the population; it created criminal profiles of objective enemies who were not

necessarily aware of their status and then searched for a fitting candidate in society. Goldstücker fit more than one profile: as a Jew and a diplomat, closely linked to the Communist establishment, he was a perfect candidate for Communist violence.

Goldstücker matched the search for an „enemy within“ in the late 1940s and early 1950s. After 1968, he again fitted a profile, albeit a positive one, when the West greeted him as a hero of 1968, a reformist who had to flee his country. Goldstücker, however, was a far more complex character, a victim as well as a perpetrator. His continued faith in Communism clashed with his experiences in the 1950s and 1970s. Despite his repeated declarations that he did not change or revise his ideals, he clearly attempts to justify himself, an understandable reaction to the ever-changing political environments. Goldstücker felt innocent of the charges he was accused of in the 1950s, yet he admitted he was searching in his past for what he might have done wrong. Goldstücker's ambiguity regarding his own guilt was expressed in his continuous pondering of this question. He addressed the issue directly in his 1968 interview in the Slovak journal *Slovenské pohl'ady*:

> How is it with our guilt? I think that we transgressed in the sense that from critically thinking and judging people we became creatures who blindly believe.(...) Doubts should not be dismissed, but applied.“ (Liehm 1968a, 45)

In the same interview, he addressed the show trials. He described the „investigation“ that served as „technology“ to transform innocent people into criminals. Why were the defendants ready to admit their guilt? „Who did not live through it cannot imagine the shock when you find out that the biggest authority in your life lets you be investigated as a criminal.“ Goldstücker fully trusted the Party, and believed it had good - if unknown - reasons for everything it did. Therefore when arrested, he had to „look whether there is indeed nothing in his life that he did wrong. Although

subjectively you know that it is not true.“ (Liehm 1968a, 49) Goldstücker claimed that he substituted his reason to the higher reason of the Party already a long time before his arrest. In Žižek‘s terms, he was guilty in front of the Party in that he attempted to maintain some of his personal integrity.

Other defendants displayed the same tantalizing, contradictory mixture of convictions: while they believed in their innocence, they also agreed that the party was right.[134] In the 1968 interview, as well as his memoir, Goldstücker explained such attitudes by the theory of „identification with the aggressor.“ In the Czech version of the memoir, he wrote:

> Had I been arrested by my enemies, I would have defended myself until the last breath. But since it was my own Party who had me arrested, it took all the weapons out of my hand. After my release, I read a psychoanalytical study about confessions in the ‚show‘ trials. It indicated a clear diagnosis – the identification with the aggressor. (Goldstücker 2005, 70)

In manipulating the defendants the interrogators used their continued trust in the Party. The interrogator Doubek explained:

> With the defendants such as Goldstücker, a Party argument was used, when it was emphasized that the Party rejected and publicly exposed them, and if they have at least some good relationship to the Party, they must admit what is demanded of them.“ (Národní archiv, Doubek, 78)

[134] Convinced of their personal innocence, they still believed that the Party did the right thing. Their last words attest to these contradictions: Otto Schling, one of the defendants in the Slánský trial, exclaimed after the sentence had been announced: „‘Mr Chairman, I wish the Communist Party, the Czechoslovak people and President of the Republic the best.‘ Under the gallows he shouted: I have never been a spy.“ (Margolius 2006, 239) Karel Šváb, under the same circumstances, shouted: „Long live the Soviet Union, long live the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia.“ (Margolius 2006, 239) Rudolf Slánský: „I have what I deserve.“ (Margolius 2006, 240)

The defendants in the Slánský trial publicly professed their guilt, some of them even in their last letters (which they knew would not remain private). Goldstücker, who played along according to the script, also strove for personal integrity. In the *Memoir*, Goldstücker recalled the encounter with his wife:

> Ich glaube niemand würde erraten, was nach achtzehn Monaten Trennung und angesichts der Aussicht auf einen lebenslänglichen Gefängnisaufenthalt die ersten Worte waren, die wir wechselten: "unsere Einstellung zur Partei hat sich nicht geändert!" (...) Die durch die Ereignisse bewirkte Desillusionierung reichte aber nicht weiter als zum Entschluß, künftig nur nach eigenem Wissen und Gewissen zu leb en und zu handeln. Die Grundorientierung blieb die gleiche. Ich hatte mir eine Theorie gebildet, derzufolge wir in eine Sackgasse geraten waren, aus der wir nun auf den richtigen Weg zurückfinden mussten. Wir, nicht „sie". (Goldstücker 1989, 227)

Even in prison, Goldstücker fully identified with the Party.

Upon his arrest, Goldstücker was convinced of his innocence and considered the arrest a „mad error." (Goldstücker, 1989) Joseph K.'s guilt is central to many interpretations of *The Trial.* Is he guilty, and in what lies his guilt? The legal sense of guilt should be distinguished from the theological senses of guilt. The novel was customarily interpreted theologically. Joseph K. eats an apple in the morning of his arrest, and then dresses carefully – allusion to the first sin and its consequences. „This biblical motif, coupled with the equally symbolic act of dressing, suggests the beginning of K.'s ‚sinful' or ‚guilty' existence." (Anderson 1992, 161). Max Brod and Hannah Arendt considered K. guilty in a metaphysical sense. Arendt reflected on K.'s feeling of guilt in *The Trial*:

> In the case of K., submission is obtained not by force, but simply through increase in the feeling of guilt of which the unbased accusation was the origin of the accused

> man. This feeling, of course, is based in the last instance on the fact that no man is free from guilt.“ (Arendt 1994, 70)

Max Brod answered the question of Josef K.‘s guilt in the affirmative; K. was dead already in the moment of his arrest:

> Er ist bereits tot, das heißt: dem rechten Leben erstorben. (...) K. hat nicht geheiratet, ist Junggeselle geblieben, hat sich von der Realität des Lebens schrecken lassen (...) – das ist seine geheime Schuld, die ihn bereits vor der Verurteilung aus dem Kreis des Lebens ausgesondert hat.“ (*Eine Biographie*, 219 – a later edition remarks explicitly in a footnote that K. is guilty; Brod, 1991, 157)

K’s universal human guilt lies in the fact that he did not love: this judgment reflects Brod- the author of romantic novels.[135] „Das ist seine ihm selbst halbunbewußte und ihn dennoch qualände, allerdings allgemein-menschliche Schuld, um deretwillen sein eigenes Gewissen ihm den Prozeß macht.“ (Brod 1991, 157)

Is K. a victim, a perpetrator, or both? In what lies Goldstücker‘s guilt? Goldstücker was implicated in the system that turned against him. Although cleared legally of all his charges, his feeling of guilt remained central. The underlying issue is that of activity and passivity. K. accepts the predicament of his trial perhaps too easily. He goes on living his daily life, despite being arrested, and “though innocent, he is more than accommodating toward his executioners.” (Steiner 2000, 187)

Clayton Koelb discussed the proleptic/anticipatory nature of Kafka’s language. The events of the novel contradict the first sentence of the novel, which declares Kafka’s innocence but at the same time also the fact of his arrest. (Koelb 1989) Although the victims of the political

---

[135] In one of them, *Der Zauberreich der Liebe* (1926), he depicted his friend Kafka.

trials did not go on living their everyday life, they proved to be accommodating – they admitted guilt after having been subjected to torture – to their investigators, prosecutor and judges. The anticipatory nature of language is humorously used in a proverb, fabricated in *The Trial* in what can be viewed as emulation of oral creativity: „Einen solchen Proceß haben, heißt ihn schon verloren haben." (*Der Proceß*, 126) A proverb that could be cynically applied to Stalinist show trials.

The similarities between Goldstücker's depiction of his arrest and K's are striking, though they mostly concern details. To use the „Erkenntnisrichtungen" (or in fact, reading mechanisms) proposed by Stromšík, Goldstücker might have read Kafka with the benefit of gaining a distance to his own self and his own past. Yet Goldstücker is not very reflective; the narrative hints at the opaqueness of the past, which is not sufficiently questioned, explored, or brought into consciousness. Goldstücker used straightforward references to Kafka to frame his narrative, yet did not directly address the paradoxes of the past – his and that of his country. Instead, the details substitute for a more profound discussion of the past and of the way Kafka played a role in this past: as an author Goldstücker wrote about, and as an author that had some role in Goldstücker's self-understanding. It would be interesting to compare Goldstücker's memoir with others of comparable figures of his generation. Were they all similarly evasive? Are the constructions of their memories alike, straining for cohesion and lacking individuality? Would they rhetorically resemble each other?

Goldstücker's memoirs, both the original German and the later Czech versions, provide an indirect and limited insight into these complexities: the author did not address them as such. Rather than explore these ambiguities, he attempted to achieve coherence between his political

beliefs, attitudes and behavior. He intended to persuade the reader, both the sympathetic German reader and the skeptical Czech, of the continuity and steadiness of his ideological convictions. He did not discuss in any detail his scholarly activity; his chapter on the Liblice Conference is brief, sketchy, and does not add much new. A Kafka scholar to the world, Goldstücker perceived himself as political figure (*zoon politikoon*) rather than a literary scholar. Against a political history of fragmentation, constant change and deconstruction, he attempted to construct a coherent and stable personal history, blending in with Kafka's universe that in the end is not very convincing and seems evasive.

Conclusion: Beyond Realism

Goldstücker's aesthetic opinions evolved in the course of the1960s; a good illustration is the following statement from 1968:

> Kafka created a method of literary interpretation based on the premise that he doubts the authenticity (genuineness) of reality as it appears to us in the face it shows us – or put it differently: he doubts the genuineness of this offered face, believing that it is a mere facade, and if we want the truth we need to penetrate behind this facade. This alternative was formulated by Garaudy. Accordingly: either we throw overboard everything that modern art created, or expand the definition of realism so that even modern art fits it.[136]

[136] Translation from the Slovak is mine. ("Kafka vytvoril metódu literárnej tvorby, vychádzajúc z toho, že pochybuje o pravosti skutečnosti, ako sa nám javí podl'a tváre, ktorú nám nastavuje – alebo inak: že pochybuje o pravosti tejto ponúkanej tváre, má pocit, že je to fasáda, a ak chceme pravdu, musíme vniknúť za tú fasádu. Tak sa dospelo k alternative, ktorú formuloval Garaudy asi takto: Alebo hodíme cez palubu všetko, čo moderné umenie vytvorilo, alebo rozšírime definíciu realizmu tak, aby sa do nej vošlo i moderné umenie.") (Liehm 1968a, 41)

In this statement, Goldstücker significantly revised his 1963 opinions. Literature does not simply mirror reality and alienation, as he held in his Liblice paper. In 1963, he interpreted Karl Rossmann's affiliation with the stoker as Kafka's positive attitude towards the working class. His interpretive approach is more complex in 1968. In line with the renewed interest in Modernism and the avant-gardes in Eastern Europe, Goldstücker acknowledged a more complex view of what „reality" is and credited Kafka with an ability to see beyond its „face," its surface. Attempts to depict reality by describing its surface failed. Nineteenth-century realism is no longer capable of expressing the complexities of contemporary reality.

Goldstücker's ideas are somewhat closer to those later interpreters who read Kafka non-mimetically. (E.g. Thorlby, 1976) Kafka differs from nineteenth-century realism in his modernist approach, from novelists such as Austen, Balzac, Dickens or Fontane: the character portraits in these novels constituted a „signifying surface," which enabled the reader to decipher their „inner character." (Anderson 1992, 156) Kafka, by contrast, especially his novel *The Trial*, could be described as „the negative version of [such] characterological typing." (Anderson 1992, 157) Kafka's novel, its „signifying surface," is not „legible" as was Balzac's. Goldstücker did not quite arrive at such interpretation, but came closer; also his 1968 reading of Kafka rests on the assumption of literature being legible, of depicting reality, if we remove its "façade," if we can reach beyond this façade. In his use of the figure of the façade, Goldstücker comes close to the 1960s writers; the motif of facade, mask and unmasking, was important in 1960s prose and drama (e.g. Havel's *The Garden Party*, Topol's *The End of Carnival*.)

Goldstücker's understanding of realism nevertheless remained rather traditional, for example in comparison to the theatre director Jan Grossman. In his penetrating notes to his adaptation of *The Trial*, Grossman claimed that it is necessary to „start from the surface": „Kafka's story is entirely communicated through the characters' speaking, their movements, behavior, acting." (Grossman 1964) Grossman proposes a non-mimetic reading that does not distinguish between surface and depth, between signs and the signified. The character's gesture or manners of speaking do not point out towards some deeper features, to some underlying psychological structures.

The debate about Kafka in the 1960s reveals close links between politics, literature, and history, as well as the political underpinnings of literary interpretation. To reform-minded Marxists such as Goldstücker, Kafka was a tool for a cautious or indirect coping with the recent traumatic past: rather than with concrete memory of Stalinist crimes, Goldstücker was concerned with the future. To writers and critics on the other pole of the political spectrum, Kafka was a symbol of non-political, non-ideological literature that indirectly challenged the existing political and cultural status quo.

Goldstücker cautiously challenged Stalinist Communism by promoting the discussion of Kafka. Still, his method of literary interpretation in 1963 was steeped in conservative politics and approach to literature that did not permit him to go beyond the reductionist reading of Kafka's writing as a depiction of alienation. Kafka, in such approach, is read not for his unique, specific literary qualities, but as a representative of certain age and culture and as raising questions and

depicting problems that may be instrumental for analyzing later social circumstances. Goldstücker's 1963 texts conformed to older models of criticism that were overcome by some literary texts, film and theatre during the 1960s that had strong links to Kafka, whether intertextual or in some ways saw themselves indebted to Kafka's legacy.

The reception of Kafka in 1960s Czechoslovakia offers a glimpse into more general reading practices. As Stromšík and Steiner argued, Kafka had a special significance for the East European readers who identified his fiction with their every day experience. It is hard to resist the temptation of seeing parallels between the universe of Kafka's prose and the experiences of the 1950s Stalinist show trials; in both cases, the trial and accusation existed so to say independently of the defendants and their deeds. Such readings of Kafka's prose can however be contrasted with others that reveal a substantial non-mimetic quality of the texts; this was perceived and imaginatively recreated for example by Jan Grossman.

Reading Kafka as prophecy was common both in the East and in the West (e.g. Brod, Arendt) where Kafka was often described as having foreseen modern totalitarianism, National Socialism and Communism. As far as the connections between Kafka and Communism, the readings in the East were more varied and sophisticated than the generic, undifferentiated views on the same topic by Western critics who equated Communism with Kafka‘s universe.

Adorno noted that readers often experience *déjà vu* when reading Kafka's novels. (Adorno, 304) A reader naturally and intuitively makes connections between a text and his/her everyday experiences, filling in the gaps in the texts, even going against the text where it resists such simple identifications. Goldstücker is interesting because his 1963 interpretation conceals

rather than admits such connections. It is only in his 1989 memoir that the connection is made explicit, but even in the book titled *Prozesse*, Goldstücker resists full coming to terms with the past. By 1989, Goldstücker and his generation were made obsolete by political and literary developments in Czechoslovakia. In politics, the reformed Marxists of 1968, led by Alexandr Dubček, as the symbol of the Prague Spring, were marginalized and overtaken by the younger generation of Václav Havel and Václav Klaus, both contributors to the only non-Marxist journal in the sixties, the short-lived *Tvář*. In the cultural realm, the shade of Marxism of this or that critic became insignificant as Marx and Marxism are taught at Czech universities only in historical surveys, and Marxist criticism or even critical theory of the Frankfurt School variety do not exist. With the end of totalitarianism, Kafka can of course be read and discussed freely, yet his works have also lost some of their urgent relevance for the interpretation of Czech social reality. "Kafka" is still present everywhere in Prague, but often as an empty signifier, on T-shirts and postcards and in a Kafka Museum that does not contain a single authentic object that relates to the author.

Chapter IV

Kafka in Czech Samizdat

This chapter focuses on the presence of Kafka in Czech samizdat culture. I examine samizdat editions of Kafka's works as well as essays about the author published in the early 1960s, and during the so-called normalization period of the 1970s and 1980s. This chapter complements the previous chapters by showing the presence of Kafka in the periods when he was not published officially, from 1948 to 1958 and after 1968 until the change of regime in 1989 (with the one exception of a reissue of a 1964 collection of Kafka's stories in 1983, however without the original Afterword by Goldstücker). I demonstrate that Kafka was present in Czech culture and intellectual life also during the times when he was not published officially and the availability of earlier published works (e.g. *The Castle*, 1935, *The Trial*, 1958, stories which were published in the late 1920s) was limited.

This chapter revises the standard narrative of the reception of Kafka in Czechoslovakia that emphasizes political disruptions over cultural continuities. This standard narrative records the suppression of Kafka's publications after the 1948 coup, the break in the ice in the late fifties through the mid-sixties, leading to a short spring in 1968-9, and a return to deep freeze in the seventies and eighties. However, I demonstrate that underground, a continuous undercurrent stream of Kafka reception, appreciation, scholarship and interest, continued to flow unaffected by the vagaries of political censorship and official culture.

I also show that there has been a surprising continuity between Eisner's 1920s-1930s interpretation of Kafka, which emerged during the democratic First Czechoslovak Republic, and the 1950s, in the concept/metaphor of ghetto that was used by Goldstücker and that emerged, newly transformed, in the 1970s' underground culture. It is possible to write a continuous history of the idea of ghetto in Czech culture from the 1920s to the present.

The meaning of the term *samizdat* is contentious. It must mean at least a "particular mode of producing and disseminating nonconformist texts in the former Communist countries" (Steiner 2008, 613) and is usually applied in the Czech context to the post-Soviet normalization period of 1970s and 1980s. In that sense, Kafka was not a typical "samizdat author" (a term reserved usually for living authors who published exclusively in samizdat in the 1970s and 1980s).[137] Kafka's works were published by the "official" state publishing houses during the 1960s, and in subsequent decades, some readers had some access to them, albeit limited; the access to them in the libraries was restricted (not all libraries however adhered to the instructions to put these books in a safe), and they were often stolen.[138] Private individuals who bought copies during the liberal years kept them, but new demand did not necessarily meet with old supply. It was possible to buy older editions in secondhand bookstores, but they were rare that the employees bought them for themselves or their friends.[139] (The demand for editions of Kafka's books was even higher in the early 1960s. In Liblice, Goldstücker told his colleagues an anecdote about an „old comrade" who confessed that his "heranwachsender Sohn ihm vor kurzer

[137] See the bibliography of Czech samizdat 1972-1991, compiled by Jitka Hanáková, *Edice českého samizdatu*, Praha, Národní knihovna české republiky, 1997.
[138] Josef Čermák recalls how during "normalization," Kafka's books were locked in a special underground room, administered by the Ministry of Interior. They were accessible only with some special permission. Petr Placák, "Toho Picáka mi sem nevěšte!" Interview with Josef Čermák, *Babylon*, 3-4, June 20th, 2011, 4.
[139] From my interview with Jan Šulc, a former employee at a second hand bookstore in Prague and an editor of publishing house *Odeon* during the 1980s, in July 2011.

Zeit gestanden habe, sein Moped für Kafkas Schloss eingetauscht zu haben." (Goldstücker, 1966)

Kafka was ignored in the official realm of published books and journals and in school curricula. It was prohibited to perform his works on stage and on the radio and television. Still, he maintained a strong presence in the unofficial cultural realm that used samizdat as its medium for self-expression.

The Russian word "samizdat" entered Czech parlance in the 1970s.[140] Previously, "typescripts" of Kafka's works as well as secondary essays about them had been in circulation already in the late 1950s and early 1960s. I use the term samizdat broadly to denote various "handmade" editions of Kafka's works, whether they were based on previously officially published texts or whether they were of texts by and about Kafka that had never been published before. I extend the term also to include literary artifacts such as letters smuggled out of prison. I examine the way 'Kafka' functioned as a code in the unofficial realm of samizdat and "tamizdat," or exilic publications. I use samizdat broadly to mean texts and artifacts as well as their mode of production and their particular social, political and cultural contexts, most notably the presence of pervasive state censorship.

I start with an examination of Ivan Martin Jirous's typescripts of Kafka's works from the early 1960s, as well as his use of a quotation from Kafka in the legendary "Report on the Third Czech Musical Revival" in 1970s; I examine then a collection of essays published in the samizdat journal *Obsah* to mark the centenary of Kafka's birth, and the Kafka references in the

[140] The term was coined in 1950s in the Soviet Union. (Machovec 2009)

prison letters of Jiřina Šiklová. These politically and socially diverse authors offer clues for understanding the role of Kafka's works and for deciphering the Kafka 'code' in the language of samizdat publishing and its reading community.

One surprising ideational continuity in the pre-political undercurrent of Czech culture from the 1920s to 1980s is the figure of the ghetto. A dominant idea in Eisner's essays about Kafka in the democratic and multicultural late 1920s, it was present through the still Stalinist late 1950s and early 1960s (as I discuss in the chapter on Eisner) though secularized (references to "isolation" and "insularity"), and reemerged in the normalization period of political and official cultural petrifaction and new Communist consumerism of the seventies and eighties.

The notion of "ghetto" and "ghettoization" is not random; Jirous appropriated the term to describe the situation of self-imposed isolation from the official realm by the underground society. The ghetto metaphor was thus appropriated and transformed in samizdat practice from a term describing Prague's former Jewish-German ghetto[141], to a term describing political opposition. The American dimension is yet another dimension which will come later in the chapter.

The standard or received narrative of the cultural history of Communist societies during and after the Cold War has assumed two "myths." First, of total control by the totalitarian state, and second, of total revolutionary rapture in all aspects of life in a very short period. More recently however, historians of the "everyday" in totalitarian societies, of the deeper levels of habits, mentalities, and ideas, discovered both continuities between the pre-totalitarian and

[141] More about the use of "ghetto" in my first chapter about Eisner.

totalitarian periods and the limits of totalitarian control of society. Even a totalitarian state with an extensive and powerful secret police and an army of informers cannot control every nook and cranny of society, and there can be spontaneous cultural activity, free of state control. My argument here, within the confines of the history of ideas and culture, fits this new historiography of the totalitarian everyday. (Crowley & Reid 2002)

While distinguishing the official discontinuities from the underground continuities this chapter also shows that the borders between the three realms of Czech literary production – the above-ground official, the underground, and the across-the-border exilic – were porous. I will point out some interesting lineages and connections that challenge the strict separation between these three realms. (Holý, 2007) Even a totalitarian state has its limits and it cannot seal hermetically the three realms from each other.

The examination of Kafka in samizdat reveals continuities with the earlier reading of Kafka that I examined in the previous chapters of this dissertation: 'Kafka' continued to be perceived as a code, either as a "code for a different type of reality" or a code in a very specific, literal sense, as it served as an identification tool in the process of dissemination of exilic literature in Czechoslovakia. The samizdat publications of Kafka's works in the 1970s and 1980s constitute a cultural continuity with the 1950s/1960s. The topos of ghetto, crucial for the interpretations of Kafka since the 1920s, continues to play a crucial role in the reading and interpretation of Kafka into the normalization period, as it newly emerges as self-description of the underground community. I will show that during the normalization era, Kafka played the role of a model for identification in much more pronounced and articulate way than in earlier decades.

What is Samizdat?

The Samizdat library in Prague, *Libri Prohibiti*, contains typescripts that copied Kafka formerly conventionally published works, as well as essays about the author, and various literary texts related to Kafka, both originally written in Czech and translations to Czech. (Altogether several dozens of items.)[142] The earliest item is an essay by the surrealist poet Zbyněk Havlíček, "Psychopathologie v díle Franze Kafky," written around 1959. Other early items are Jirous's typescript copies of Kafka's works, the *Castle* and the "Starvation Artist," among them. Jirous's name does not appear in any of the typescripts; the information about the translator, the year when the typescript was made, is incomplete or missing.

Jirous copied Eisner's 1935 translation of the *Castle* using green carbon paper. In the copy available at Prague's *Libri Prohibiti*, the sheets are not bound, the pages not numbered; the loose sheets of onion-skin paper are inserted between two cardboard sheets, and held together by rubber bands. On the right margin, some lines extend to the end of the page, occasionally a letter is cut off – this might have happened as the carbon paper or the other thin sheets of paper (Jirous mentions that he made ten copies, which exceeds the more usual limit of eight copies during one typing) was not inserted carefully enough. The title of the novel and Kafka's name are written by hand, with a pencil, along with a note stating that the copy was made in 1962 at Brancourov. („Opsáno na Brancourově".) The bibliographical entry for this samizdat artifact (should we call

[142] Some of them are the same (or roughly the same) texts that appeared in various samizdat collections, e.g. the essay by Ivan Klíma, "Už se blíží meče".

it a book when the volume consists of lose papers?)[143] informs us that this copy was made by Ivan M. Jirous. A note reveals that the original text that this copy was made from is Eisner's 1935 translation of the novel.

The uncertainties about the identity of the person who copied the translation of Kafka's novel, about the source that served as the original (not in the case of the *Castle*, but of other samizdat copies), and the dates, are typical of samizdat. In her articles on Soviet samizdat, Ann Komaromi (2008, 632) focused on this aspect of samizdat texts and uses the term „epistemic instability" to describe these texts that are not „automatically invested with authority." The authors often used pseudonyms, or the author's name was missing entirely, or acronyms were given. Translators often took great liberties with the text they translated, sometimes cutting out entire portions of the original text. Once the text was released into circulation, new copies were often made from the original copies by other transcribers, „Samizdat texts had a tendency to multiply uncontrollably. "(Ibid, 636) Often, the distance grew between the original text and the subsequent versions.

I doubt how appropriate is Komaromi's term „instability" to describe samizdat texts. The various samizdat copies of copies have varying levels of reliability or fidelity (to use the terminology of textual critics). But that does not imply that the text or the original text that served as the source for the copying, is not „stable." There is and there was an original (such as Eisner's translation of Kafka's *Castle*, published in 1935). Even texts that were published for the first time in samizdat were copies of an original „stable" text. Variations (mutations, „revisions") of the text were introduced through the process of further copying. This means that at least in

[143] For the ambiguity of "book", see Tucker (2004, 181-182).

principle, sometimes in practice, and certainly now when all these materials are available, it is possible to compare the original texts with its copies and come to some conclusions. By contrast, it is impossible to make such comparison in the case of the scriptures or the Homeric poems, sometimes because there has never existed an original text.

Komaromi points out how the samizdat „unstable" textual culture differed from modern print culture, characterized, in terms used by Elizabeth Eisenstein's book on print culture, by standardization, dissemination, and fixity. Samizdat forms an alternative culture to that of modern print; echoing Lev Rubinstein, she calls it an „extra-Gutenberg phenomenon." (Ibid 632) Komaromi sets samizdat texts against the norms of print culture in the modern, post-Gutenberg period. „Samizdat texts, by contrast, were closer to unstandardized, spontaneously disseminated, unfixed oral culture." (Ibid 634) The parallel with the transmission of oral composition such as heroic poetry (e.g. Homer), or the revisions of the Bible through copying, might be useful. It suggests that the act of transmission, unlike in modern print culture, is much more creative and reflects later concerns.

In earlier studies, samizdat had been viewed, in sharp contrast, as an opposition, to the unreliable, distorted, censored, Soviet official print. To those who view samizdat culture as an island of truth in the sea of distortions and fabrications, Komaromi presents a surprising conclusion: „In fact, samizdat reflected in heightened form the instability afflicting official Soviet print." (Ibid, 634)[144] As original and inspiring this mirror-image theory of samizdat may

[144] In her argument about the samizdat reflecting the instability of Soviet print, Komaromi follows in the footsteps of the earlier study of Soviet samizdat culture by Sergei Oushakine, who pointed out how the dissident discourse was a part of the official Soviet discourse.

be, I still have to disagree with this conclusion. Soviet print culture intentionally distorted external, non-literary reality, by censoring and re-censoring names, events and even images that it wanted to conceal. Samizdat did not intentionally hide facts. It may have distorted the original texts by the process of copying or through bold, unprofessional editorial practices (e.g. cutting out substantial parts of the original in translation of Uris' *Exodus*, in Komaromi's example). There is no denial that the approach to authorship was „non-standard" to say the least: in many cases, authors or translators were not asked for permission to translate and publish their texts. The process of creating samizdat edition often (not always) radically differed from standard editorial and printing practices, but these practices were necessitated by the conditions of censorship. Many of the features that constitute samizdat's „instability" were simply rational and unavoidable precautions and subterfuges to protect the texts and their anonymous authors, editors, translators, and typists. There is a qualitative difference between willful distortions of truth in the official press, and the involuntary ones imposed on the producers of samizdat by their circumstances.

The notion of censorship is an indispensable foil to that of samizdat. There cannot be samizdat without censorship. Other alternative forms of publishing in societies without censorship such as various art books (broadsides, etc) published today by independent presses that use old letterpress and various old techniques to manually produce their books may share with samizdat some of its material aspects. Yet independent publishers do not do samizdat, they publish independent art books.

Samizdat culture was diverse; indeed, it was not standardized, to use Komaromi's own term. Samizdat included spontaneous and individual acts of copying but also more organized, established activities, such as regularly published journals and book series with pronounced and meticulous editorial practices, e.g. the journal *Kritický sborník* (Critical Anthology) or the book series *Edice Expedice* (Dispatch Edition).[145] *Kritický sborník*, which published critical essays on literature and philosophy, treated published text professionally, employing professional typists, proofreading and correcting mistakes.[146] For example, the samizdat journal *Kritický sborník* published Goldstücker's article „Kafka's Eckermann" for the first time in Czech. The books of *Edice Expedice* were professionally bound. In later stages, with the availability of Xerox machines, samizdat was photocopied, thus increasing the fidelity of the texts by reducing the rate of copying by hand. Although there was an obvious evolutionary technological progress in the production of samizdat, the more advanced methods coexisted with the more „wild" and „primitive" methods employed by individuals who spontaneously simply copied texts that reached them and they particularly appreciated.

Official print and samizdat share many common practices, including willful distortions of original in translations, the use of pseudonyms, etc. But in setting samizdat and the Western or

[145] The critic and editor Jan Lopatka describes the "technical procedure" of the samizdat production of Kriticky sbornik, which were published from 1981 to 1988: "We made a certain number of proof read copies – at the beginning there were about 35, the original print run grew very fast to about 120 to 150 copies – which we distributed. Some subscribers copied each in ten to twelve copies. Later we copied part of the print run by Xerox machines. Therefore it is hard to estimate the overall print run. My estimate is 600 copies. The publicity was fairly good abroad. We sent copies to Vilem Precan, who copied them and distributed further into libraries." (Lopatka, 1995, 467-470) See also: "Dámy a pánové!" and "O původu, vzniku a dosavadní historii Edice Expedice. Pokus o historickou rekonstrukci podnikaný pamětníkem." Lopatka, Jan, *Šifra lidské existence.* 283-287. See also Sylvie Richterová's testimony from a lecture by Lopatka about the "rigorous editorial practices" (Richterová), examples from Edice Petlice and Kvart. Richterová, *Revolver Revue*, 26/1994, 236-238. Ivan Havel in *Revolver Revue* 26/1994. Ivan Havel, "Bermudské tajemství", 220-221.

[146] This was done by hand, using liquid paper/whitewash, in each individual copy of the typescript. The typed copies on onion skins were laid out on a large table, while the serious editor read aloud the page, line and what should be corrected, while several individuals corrected the mistakes in their respective copy or copies of the journal.

modern print against each other, Komaromi over-emphasizes the difference between publication in Soviet countries (both samizdat and official) and in the West.

I disagree with Komaromi that samizdat texts became „fixed“ only when they were published in the West. „These samizdat texts could be fixed by publication when they found its way to the West. Some texts did not make it to be published. On the other hand, some samizdat texts were copies of already published texts – but the copying created, much less stable variants.‘“ (Komaromi 2008, 638) In contrast to Komaromi, I consider the samizdat edition as a publication, and thus a „fixing“ of the text. This is a matter of contention, since only some bibliographies list samizdat editions. The handmade corrections in each copy of the journal *Kritický sborník* serve as a metaphor for an attempt to fix and stabilize the text.

The authors of samizdat engaged in a cultural mission. They attempted to create cultural continuity by copying and distributing texts that were not otherwise available, such as Kafka’s texts, to overcome a „ghettoization“ of their culture and connect to the wider culture. We should view samizdat as an event, as an act of generosity, as it is aimed at sharing.

Jirous from Copying to a Turning Point in the Underground

Ivan Martin Jirous (born in 1944), an art historian, poet and a leading figure of the underground movement of 1970s/1980s, as well as the artistic director of the underground band The Plastic People of the Universe, used Kafka’s aphorism as an epigraph in his „Report on the Third Czech Musical Revival“ (1975), the founding text of the Czech underground. Jirous’s interest in Kafka goes back to his youth. In the early 1960s, Jirous had copied Kafka’s texts before they were

readily available (Kafka was mostly published in the second half of the 1960s, as the liberalization progressed; the *Castle* was published in 1935 though this edition was not readily available a quarter of a century later, and *The Trial* in 1958. Jirous's copies preceded the Liblice Conference as well as the official publications of Kafka's works in the later part of the 1960s.)

Ivan M. Jirous copied various literary works in the early 1960s, first while a high school student in Humpolec (the town in Eastern Bohemia where he came from), then while he worked as a stoker in a printing house in Havlíčkův Brod and a construction worker in Volary (a condition for being allowed to enter university was to work first for one year on an industrial plant), and finally as an art history student in Prague. Although Jirous later referred to his activity as samizdat, the term had not yet been used for such publications at the time. In the early 1960s, Jirous copied a varied range of authors and texts that were not widely available, either from older translations that were published conventionally or from new translations that existed only in manuscript. The authors included Beckett, Gabriel Marcel, the Czech author Věra Linhartová, and André Breton (*Nadja)*.[147] According to the bibliography at *Libri Prohibiti*, Jirous copied twenty-two different texts. In addition to those mentioned by Jirous, the list includes Rilke's *Duineser Elegien* in Eisner's 1930 translation, Comte de Lautréamont, Maurice Maeterlinck, Heidegger, and the Czech Jewish author Richard Weiner.[148]

In the interview I conducted with him, Jirous explained that he set out to copy all Kafka's works that were not generally accessible. He copied Kafka's stories (1961, translator not indicated), Paul Eisner's 1935 translation of the *Castle* (1962), and the collection "The

[147] My interview with Ivan Martin Jirous, Prague June 2nd, 2011.
[148] I wish to thank Jiří Gruntorád from *Libri Prohibiti* for his assistence in using the library's collection and his insights about the unique nature of Jirous's samizdat.

Starvation Artist" (probably 1961). Jirous describes this activity: „I was publishing my own samizdat with the title „Opsáno na Brancourově" (copied in Brancourov). Brancourov was in fact called Bransoudov, but we have renamed it. It was our spiritual place near Humpolec. (...) I copied all the available work of Franz Kafka including the *Castle*. In addition to *The* Trial, which was published previously as a book, I copied everything what was spread in various places, many translations of short stories by anonymous authors. I also copied Pierre-Jean Jouve, Suzuki's Zenbuddhism, Gabriel Marcel, and Věra Linhartová. There was a lot of it, ten copies of each title."[149]

Jirous described in our interview how he was searching for interesting texts, literary as well as about art, and copying texts that were „circling around." He received these texts from friends, and explains how he felt indebted to them (e.g. Jiří Padrta, Kamil Linhart) and „obliged to transmit the knowledge further." This was part of his personal discovery of modern literature and art; in this „amazing period [of the early 1960s] modern or abstract art again enters the stage." In Jirous's words, Padrta „maintained [continuity] of cultural consciousness," and Jirous's own samizdat activity can be viewed as having the same incentive. Jirous drew the line between his work and similar but later samizdat activities: „After the invasion of allied armies, at the beginning of the seventies, again such focal points started emerging, and continued in the conscious creation of cultural identity. One such group was around Jindřich Chalupecký[150]. (...) He once said that it will again be necessary to copy books. The term samizdat had not been used then yet." (Jirous 1997, 532-533)

[149] "Za čtyři roky se dá zapomenout na všechno." (Rozhovor s Janem Pelcem.) 1994, in Jirous (1997), 532, 533.
[150] Jindřich Chalupecký (1910-1990), art historian.

A lot of labor went into the copying. Reading was not easy either: the poorly visible print made reading strenuous, as did the sometime missing lines, and the very form of loose papers. Jirous recalls the process of copying Breton‘s *Nadja*, from a copy that was held in the safe of Prague’s Municipal Library. Through an acquaintance who was a night watchman in the library, Jirous and his friend got a copy of the text; one of them read it aloud throughout the night, the watchman recorded the text in stenograph; from these notes they copied it in longhand, and then Jirous copied the text on a typewriter.[151] Although Jirous was not persecuted for his samizdat activities, in his words, he was under surveillance at the time. He was interrogated by the Secret Police in 1961. „I don’t doubt that they knew about my copying, but I was never interrogated on that account, and I was able to finish the school.“ (Ibid, 533)

Jirous copied Kafka‘s *Castle* on a Remington typewriter while working as a stoker in a printing house, and it took him about six months. He read the novel for the first time as he was copying it. During this work, his older cousin, Jiří Padrta from Prague, informed him that the novel was to be published in Prague.[152] Jirous copied Kafka’s stories from earlier translations in various journals, but also from manuscript translations not published before. Jirous was making ten copies at a time, which he then distributed among his friends. The circle included the artists and art historians Jiří Padrta, Zbyšek Sion, Zorka and Jan Ságl (Jirous‘s sister and her future husband). These copies were not copied further as was common in the 70s and 80s; this is one of the main differences between the earlier activities such as Jirous’, and the much more developed alternative publishing scene in the 1970s and 1980s. Jirous’s undertaking was very rare in the

[151] “Když nejde o život, jde o hovno.“ S Ivanem Martinem Jirousem hovoří Viktor Karlík a Jan Placák. *Magorův zápisník*.“ IN Jirous 1997, 613.
[152] *The Castle* was published in 1964, in translation by Vladimír Kafka and with an epilogue by Eduard Goldstücker. (Prague: Mladá fronta, 1964). The same translation was published again in 1969, and then again in 1989.

early 1960s.[153] Jirous did not know about the earlier samizdat activities of the poet Egon Bondy and his *Půlnoc* (Midnight) samizdat edition; he got to know this poet crucial for the 1970s underground movement only later.

Kafka in the „Merry Ghetto" of the Czech Underground

Ivan Martin Jirous used one of Kafka's aphorisms as an epigraph in his "Report on the Third Czech Musical Revival" (Zpráva o třetím hudebním obrození) dated February 1975 and published for the first time in the Samizdat *Edice Expedice* in 1976. This "most broadly distributed of Jirous's text"[154] was spontaneously copied numerous times, and was also included in various samizdat series and journals. It was read publicly on December 13th ,1975 during the "Evening of poetry and music" in Přeštice in Western Bohemia. This reading became the foundation for the accusation (accusation protocol) against the organizers of the evening Karel Havelka, Miroslav Skalický, and František Stárek.[155]

This legendary, imaginative, and rich text, the founding text of the Czech underground movement, is titled a *Report*, yet its style and function is that of a manifesto. It does not only lay out for its audience (readers as well as listeners, as I will explain later) a description of a situation and developments that led to the emergence of a Czech underground movement, but brings into existence this "third revival, "the second culture", by articulating it. It requests – albeit indirectly – adherence to a particular code of conduct.

---

[153] Jiří Gruntorád, in an interview I conducted with him in May 2011 in Prague.
[154] Michael Špirit, in Ivan Jirous, *Magorův zápisník*, Praha: Torst, 1997, 696. The text circulated also in the form of magnitizdat, a recording of Jirous's reading of the text.
[155] Ibid, 696, 707.

Although there is just one quotation from Kafka in the *Report*, the pivotal significance of the text for the Czech alternative culture, implies that it merits attention here especially following Jirous' youthful engagement with Kafka in the previous decade. Jirous identified a turning point in 1973, when he (talking in the authoritative pronoun "we") realized that under the conditions of the political oppression prevailing five years after the occupation of Czechoslovakia in 1968, there is no reason to wait for external political, social or cultural changes. The years after 1969 were "a rather dead period as far as our collective activities were concerned; a time of muteness and hangover as far as the official cultural situation was concerned."(Machovec 2006, 22) The year 1973 was a "decisive year in overcoming that crisis."

Jirous asserted:

> People had to stop relying on the fact that something would once again enable musicians to play, poets to publish and artists to exhibit. Relying on miracles cripples creative energy and, above all, weakens collective activity (…) But the conscious realization or the subconscious sensing that something is here for good is necessarily liberating. If the world is never going to be any different than it is now, there is no need to waste your time waiting for salvation. We must learn to live in the existing world in a way that is both joyful and dignified. (Ibid)

Jirous's way of living "in the existing world" consists of creating art and music in an alternative universe outside of the official realm, within a community that wishes to "live in truth," (Ibid, 10) a philosophical term used by the Czech philosopher Jan Patočka and later by Václav Havel. (cf. Tucker 2000) Underground is a movement that has "created, outside of a corrupt society, its own independent world with a different charge of inner energy, different aesthetic and, as a result, a different ethic." (Machovec 2006, 12) Jirous acknowledges the inspiration of the early 1960s American underground culture (Sanders, Ginsberg, Leary – hence the English word "underground") – that inspired the Czech underground that was originally conceived (or

conceived itself) in "mythological" sense, with its own "cosmogony"(Ibid, 14).[156] In the political context of the 1970s, the Czech underground constituted itself in the socio-cultural tradition of the underground movement as it emerged in the US. Jirous also quotes Marcel Duchamp: "The great artist of tomorrow will go underground" to articulate the position of the Czech underground. Duchamp, according to Jirous, "meant the underground as a new mental attitude of an honest artist who reacts against dehumanization and prostitution of values in the consumer society."(Ibid 16) The underground is a "spiritual position"[157] of intellectuals and artists.

Jirous's *Report* is a declaration, a manifesto, a program. It is an authoritative text; its title boldly refers to the nineteenth-century National Revival, the Czech national project that sought to "revive" and often newly create the Czech language and culture vis a vis the German. (Macura 1995b; Toman 2009) The *Report* is addressed to the emerging community of underground culture, but it also forges and binds this community. It articulates a way of life, establishes a moral position to be emulated, spiritual and existential position of "life in truth." The "second culture" community itself was comprised of young people from around the Czechoslovakia (not centered in Prague) and often of working class background. The intellectualism of Jirous's text with its literary references established in a way an "alternative cannon" of authors and texts to be revered by the underground community.

The *Report* is divided into thirteen short sections. Some of them are introduced by epigraphs of curiously but significantly diverse provenance, ranging from the rock band The Fugs, to the Gospel, Comte de Lautréamont, to Milton and Kafka. While Mao's epigraph that

[156] The origins of the underground movement were tied to the music of the psychedelic band *The Primitives Group.*
[157] The existing translation renders „duchovní pozice" as „mental attitude", which I do not find very accurate.

introduces the entire text elicits a forceful ironic effect, the choice of Kafka's aphorism as an epigraph introducing a section in the middle of the text, deeply resonates with the content of the *Report*. Kafka's words are applied to the specific ethical-existential position of the underground movement.

Jirous uses the following Kafka's aphorism:

"Jistým bodem počínaje není již návratu. Tohoto bodu je třeba dosáhnouti."

"Von einem gewissen Punkt an gibt es keine Rückkehr mehr. Dieser Punkt ist zu erreichen."[158]

This and other similar short texts were described by Brod as aphorisms and published for the first time in 1931 in a collection edited by Brod and H. J. Schoeps under the title *Beim Bau der chinesischen Mauer*.[159] Brod and subsequent readers interpreted Kafka's aphorisms theologically and metaphysically (Brod's own title to the anthology, with its reference to the "true way", invites such a reading). They have been read in the context of the other aphorisms, the immediate context often influencing the reading of a particular text. In the case of our aphorism, number 5, the interpretation of the surrounding aphorisms was carried over or strongly influenced it.

The first aphorism mentions "wahre Weg," while number 26, reads "Es gibt ein Ziel, aber keinen Weg; was wir Weg nennen, ist Zögern." Muller focuses on the "Ziel" and reads in this

---

[158] Kafka 1992, 114.

[159] This book contained two sections, „Betrachtungen über Sünde, Leid, Hoffnung un den wahren Weg", and „Er. Aufzeichnungen aus dem Jahr 1920". Kafka wrote these texts between October 18th and 1917 and February 26th 1918 in Zürau, where he stayed for seven months at his sister's Ottla after he was diagnosed with tuberculosis. In 1918 or 1920, he excerpted the "aphorisms" (he himself did not use this word) and assigned numbers to them according to the chronology in which they were in the notebooks (Oktavhefte). In these notebooks, the "aphorisms" were interspersed among diary entries, and often read in their biographical context, a reading supported by their original position in the diaries. (Against the biographical context of the second and ultimate break up with Felice Bauer).

context aphorism 5 as a possibility of reaching the "Ziel." "'Von einem gewissen Punkt an gibt es keine Rückkehr mehr. Dieser Punkt ist zu erreichen.' scheint die Möglichkeit anzudeuten, dass es zu einer solchen Annäherung an das Ziel kommen könnte."[160] I would, however, argue that the aphorism can be read differently when we focus on the "way" as a continuous process, rather than "Ziel." Kafka's „Punkt" then does not refer to an „end" or „goal", to a point to be reached, but marks a provisory/intermittent point that is to be reached in order to continue the „way." This is a much more plausible reading if we read Aphorism 5 without allowing the other aphorisms to influence our reading. Kafka's "Punkt" is not the ultimate "Ziel," but just a point – an important one – that must be reached along the way.

Jirous' own reading also focuses on the aphorism as such, and resets it into another context – of the *Report* – that reinforces this kind of reading. The connection between Kafka's aphorism and the *Report* is indirect, as is typical for an epigraph. The *Report* gives the aphorism a new interpretive context, while at the same time the aphorism provides a key to Jirous' text. Which "point" was crucial, according to Jirous, for the emergence of Czech underground? From which moment there is no turning back? Is this point perceived merely subjectively and individually (by the members of the underground community), or is it determined by some external circumstance, their clash with the official culture? To what extent does reaching this "point" have a transformative power? Why is return not possible?

The section introduced by Kafka's aphorism discusses the aesthetic point when the rock band The Plastic People of the Universe, encountered the poetry of the Prague poet Egon Bondy

[160] Michael Müller, "Kafka, Franz, Aphorismen." *Kindlers Literatur Lexikon Online.*

(1930-2007; Bondy founded the first Czech samizdat series, *Půlnoc*, in the mid 1950s), which they set to music. This choice confirmed their underground status.

> By setting to music the work of a poet who was not allowed by the establishment to publish even a single poem, the Plastic People were clearly demonstrating that they were not interested in gaining a place in the official cultural structure but far more in creating and acting as a medium for what they themselves consider culture. (Machovec 2006, 19)

The point is not the "Ziel", it is the turning point; the "goal" is the authentic, creative life in truth. The turning point according to Jirous was reached in 1973, the year that "marked the beginning of the third revival of Czech music," (Ibid 21) the moment of realization of the permanence of the political oppression and overcoming of the crisis. From this point on, there was no return to inauthenticity, to the realm of officialdom.

Jirous describes the underground music culture as generating "a joyous space" (Ibid 24), and encourages people to live under the current conditions in a way that is both "joyful and dignified." He quotes the lyrics of one of the singers, Charlie Soukup, who comments with sarcasm on the lives of those members of the "first culture" who forfeited the possibility to be "free and diverse" and "be human." Jirous uses the term "mental" or "spiritual ghetto" (duchovní ghetto) to describe the situation of the Czech underground: "We are speaking about the people who live together in a mental ghetto that is not surrounded by walls, but it is scattered throughout an alien, unfriendly world."(Ibid 29)

Jirous's "spiritual ghetto" subverts the commonplace notion of "ghetto" as a place of restriction and misery, as it is imbued with joy and joyous life. The term "merry ghetto" (veselé

ghetto)[161] came to be associated with the Czech underground movement. The *Report* was printed abroad in a booklet/catalogue entitled *The Merry Ghetto*, which was published in 1978 with the record of the Plastic People's *Egon Bondy's Happy Hearts Club Banned*.[162] Peter Steiner refers to the "merry ghetto" of the Czech dissidents (conflating the Czech underground with the dissidents, a gesture that would be appreciated neither by the members of the underground community nor by the more politically oriented opponents of the Communist regime). But the same conflation is prevalent also in Philip Roth's novella *The Prague Orgy* and in Tom Stoppard's play *Rock'n'Roll* (2006).

Roth's novella depicts a journey of an American who travels to Czechoslovakia in 1976 to retrieve a Yiddish manuscript in order to smuggle it to the West and publish it there. The text is a fragmented, disjointed narrative ("… from Zuckerman's notebooks"); the narrator's encounters various dissident-like figures in Prague and at one point is interrupted by a dreamy-like depiction of the narrator's wandering in Prague that presents a different temporal and spatial realm, an East European city of the past and of the imagination:

> On foot, and with the help of a Prague map, I proceed to lose my way but also to shake my escort. By the time I reach the museum this seems to me a city that I've known all my life. The old-time streetcars, the barren shops, the soot-blackened bridges, the tunneled alleys and medieval streets, the people in a state of impervious heaviness, their faces shut down by solemnity, faces that appear to be on a strike against life (…) (Roth 1985, 458)

This is a literary image of Prague that transcends Communist Czechoslovakia in temporal as well as a spatial sense.

---

[161] The PPU member and later translator, Paul Wilson, told me that the term "veselé ghetto" was invented by Jirous, and Wilson rendered it to English as "merry ghetto". From my interview with Wilson, New York, April 2011.
[162] *The Merry Ghetto*, a booklet/catalogue published with the record *Egon Bondy's Happy Hearts Club Banned,* Paris-London 1978. Translated from Czech by Paul Wilson and Ivan Hartel. (This text was reprinted in *Views from the Inside*, Czech Underground Literature and Culture (1948-1989, Ed. Martin Machovec, FFUK, Praha 2006).

The Prague Orgy is interesting in our context in that it blends two topoi that usually belong to two different narrative genres and traditions: depiction of the everyday culture of dissent during the normalization era and a more dreamy narrative of the Prague Jewish ghetto, which echoes oral traditions of folk tales and legends. It is the author's gaze from the distance that allows bringing together these two aspects of the city that remained hidden to the locals. The novella blends together two worlds that appeared vastly disparate (temporarily, culturally) to an ordinary citizen during the normalization, who would not encounter the names of Kafka, Brod, or Meyrink anywhere in the public realm. Roth's depiction articulates connections that were perceived by underground authors such as Jirous, but not necessarily fully articulated or verbalized. From their perspective of living in the conditions of "real existing socialism" that erased from the surface anything reminiscent of the pre-Communist era, of multicultural and diverse traditions, this culture might have existed in a different century and continent. Although the stage of the Old Town remained mostly intact after the destructive sanitization of the former ghetto that ended in the first decade of the twentieth century, there were hardly any traces left in Prague of the multi-lingual and multi-national life.[163]

[163] Jewish themes were in the focus of the samizdat book series *Alef*, which was published since 1985, and its journal *Kalendář*, the only pre 1989 samizdat parallel publishing activity dedicated to Judaism. The series included translations as well as original Czech works, by authors such as Martin Buber, Emmanuel Levinas, Osip Mandelshtam, Gershom Scholem, I.B. Singer, but also Czech writers Věra Linhartová, Ladislav Klíma, or Jiří Daníček. It included Kafka's letter to Max Brod about Kafka's encounter with the rebbe of Belz, an encounter facilitated by Kafka's acquaintance Jiří Langer, (Posset 1993, 73-74).

Kafka as a Code

On November 8th 1981, the sociologist Jiřina Šiklová sent a letter from the Ruzyně prison, addressed to her friends:

> Milí přátelé,
> nezlobte se, že zatímco já se nečinně flákám v kriminále, vybízím vás k práci a připomínám, co byste měli udělat. Vzpomněla jsem si, že v červenci 1983 si budeme připomínat sté výročí narození Franze Kafky. Současně to bude i dvacet let od první kafkovské konference v Liblicích, jíž prý začal obrodný proces. Nezapomněli jste na to? (Prečan 2005, 124)

> Dear Friends,
> I apologise for urging you undertake a task and reminding you what you ought to be doing, while I'm lazing here in prison. I have remembered that in July 1983, we'll be commemorating the hundredth anniversary of Franz Kafka's birth. It will also be twenty years since the Kafka Conference at Liblice, where the renewal process is said to have started. You haven't forgotten?

Šiklová appeals to her friends to commemorate the centenary of Kafka's birth and the twentieth anniversary of the Liblice Conference. Šiklová, facilitating for almost two decades the dissemination of Western and exilic books in Czechoslovakia and samizdat at home, was arrested on the night from May 7th/8th, 1981. In the next couple of months, she underwent 34 interrogations, some of them lasted an entire day. She was released on March 22nd, 1982, "jedoch mit der Massgabe, dass das Verfahren wegen 'Subvertion' damit nicht abgeschlossen sei." (Bothmer 39, Šiklová 2005, 281)

In her letter to friends, which she managed to smuggle out of prison and which was later published in Germany, she suggests that they edit an anthology, which would recall Kafka as an author, but also the significance of the discussion over Kafka "that was a struggle for freer access to art and literature." ("pro probojování svobodnějšího přístupu k umění a literatuře v šedesátých letech.") (Prečan 2005, 124) She uses Kafka's novels to narrate what she experienced in prison:

> Kolik jen já tu za tu dobu „potkala“ zeměměřičů K. či Josefů K. pátrajících, proč byli povoláni, proč byli obviněni, v čem je jejich vina a proč se s nimi nikdo nebaví! Tito dnešní, ‘ruzynští K.’ píší, odvolávají se, píší a znovu píší a stále marně.(Ibid 283)
>
> How many land-surveyor K.’s have I met since I’ve been here, how many Josef K.’s trying to discover why they were summoned, why they were indicted, what they did wrong, and why nobody talks to them! These latterday “Ruzyně K.’s” write, appeal, write and write again, all in vain.

Šiklová’s description continues by finding further parallels between the plight of her co-prisoners, and the situations in Kafka’s novels *The Trial* and *The Castle*, as well as his story “In the Penal Colony.” “How many people here seek in vain, just like in Kafka’s “Penal Colony”, the significance of the punishment that is ‘etched’ into them, what it marks them with, what higher purpose is pursued and achieved thereby!”(Ibid, 126) (“Kolik lidí zde marně pátrá, podobně jako v Kafkově *Trestanecké* kolonii, jaký význam má trest, jenž je do nich ‚vrýván’, čím je to poznamenává, jaký vyšší záměr je tím sledován a realizován!“)

On the basis of her observations, she calls Kafka a “realistic” author (“proti němuž je Balzac symbolista”; “in comparison to whom is Balzac a symbolist”). Her oral narration – of a much later date – about the prison experience is however much more realistic than the description in the letter. In an interview, Šiklová described how the inmates communicated among each other, how she composed love letters for prostitutes who shared her cell, how everyone was making things up and invented names for themselves. “What is there to do, in prison. People are idiots, but that’s not much news. They entertain themselves by talking through the toilet, and by sending letters to each other. Above me was some guy of my age or maybe older… an intelligent man.”[164] Šiklová describes how they started to correspond with this man, whose name she did not know and who of course she never saw. She wrote to him: “I feel in this

[164] From my interview with Jiřina Šiklová, October 20, 2008, Prague.

dirty filthy coop as Frieda behind the counter in the Castle. And he reacted to that! (…) I wanted to test the guy: here some idiot tries to claim that he is an engineer. By his reaction he not only let me know that he knew about Kafka, but also the fact that this hint was enough, Kafka's name was not pronounced, [it made clear] that this man doesn't pull my leg in what he is telling me about himself. We corresponded for long, it was during Jaruzelski's coup, we discussed these things, through the use of Frída. He addressed me, Dear Frída, with a long 'i'."(Ibid)

The rhetoric of Šiklová's prison letter strikingly and suggestively differs from her oral description of the prison environment. While her retrospective recollections of the prison life are realistic, her letters from the time are all but realistic. Based on her oral description, it is hard to imagine that most of Šiklová's prison-mates analyzed their predicaments in a way that would resemble Kafka's writing and his searching characters. When writing her letter, Šiklová needed mediation through literature to understand and convey her experiences and circumstances of prison, as Goldstücker, in his letter from prison to the Minister of Interior, conceived his own situation through the prism of the Czech national narrative of "martyrdom."

Kafka's name was used as a code in the context of prison conspiracy, when names could not be revealed. Kafka's name, or precisely the oblique reference to it, a name not pronounced, was a code that established trust between Šiklová and another prisoner. Šiklová described another examples when Kafka's name was used as a code in the context of distribution of illegal texts, in which Šiklová was an important agent: as a code to recognize a foreign messenger who was to hold a book by Kafka, and they were to exchange the following lines: "Do you like Franz Kafka?" and the answer should be: "I prefer oranges," to exclude that the person was indeed just one of Kafka's fans visiting Prague. During an interrogation after her arrest, the interrogator read

her personal notes written in long hand, and there was a name, Vasco, a cover name for a Swede, who was a key in the chain of smuggling the books into Czechoslovakia. Šiklová knew that she could not reveal his name. When asked who was Vasco, she used the fact that her handwriting was difficult to decipher, and replied, "that must be Arco, the café where Kafka used to go," thus using a Kafka reference that she thought was in this context believable and harmless. (Ibid) References to Kafka bound together a community of people who had to rely on and trust each other in a hostile political environment where they were liable to be followed and arrested, but it was also used to fool the enemy, the repressive state, to facilitated a "way out," to use Kafka's words in his "Report to Academy," an escape mechanism out of a precarious and threatening situation.

Šiklová recalls how she encountered Kafka's writings as a child, when they had at home an unread copy of the *Castle* in Eisner's translation (1935), with the pages still uncut. She was then asked about Kafka as she visited Paris in June 1958, on account of "you are coming from there, too," but she did not know where Kafka was buried. She then heard of him while visiting Poland where Kafka was printed in large editions. (90,000) Šiklová recalls her surprise and her conversation with the Polish historian Jozef Lewandowski, who explained to her that unlike in Czechoslovakia, in Poland Kafka was understood differently, as the experience of brutal repression was much more extensive in Poland than in Czechoslovakia:

> 'Problematika Kafkova Procesu je pro Poláky literárním zobrazením situace, kterou většina zná z vlastního prožitku. To není, bohužel, vybstrahovaná fikce.' A pak nám, tehdy ještě vysokoškolákům, vypravoval o historii a likvidaci různých skupin odboje, o Katynu, o nejasnostech v ilegálních organizacích, o popravách, o varšavském povstání, i o falšování dějin a tehdy aktuálních diskusích.'

> The dilemma of Kafka's `Trial' is for Poles a literary depiction of a situation that most of them have been through. It is not abstracted fiction, unfortunately." And then he told us, who were still at university, the history of how various resistance groups had been wiped out, as well as about Katyn, the ambiguities in the legal organizations, the executions, the Warsaw Uprising, the falsification of history and the various discussions then in progress. (Prečan 2005, 125/282-283)

Šiklová was a student of Goldstücker at Charles University in the late 1950s, after he returned from prison, and interprets Kafka on similar terms as her teacher: "People did not understand it, but for young people it was a certain symbol, something like, we know something more and do not take this reality as it is."(ibid) Goldstücker's reading was similar; he used the figure of "façade" to describe the surface behind which lies a different reality. Both Šiklová and Goldstücker read Kafka allegorically, indicating that reality is not what it appears to be. Kafka was important for those who had a similar perception of reality and were compelled to express it indirectly, via a reference to a literary figure.

The ties between Šiklová and Goldstücker are significant. They had a personal connection (teacher and student), but also shared for a time Communist convictions. They had similar perceptions and readings of the author as a code for a different reality. Both were intellectuals in prison, and both were figures of authority: both authored public letters from prison (Goldstücker to the Ministry of Interior) in which they spoke as intellectuals whose word had a bearing.[165]

Šiklová referred in her letter about Kafka to the Liblice Conference and one of its themes, Kafka's social relevance. She insists in the letter that the envisioned anthology should comment on the historical parallels between Kafka and contemporary reality. Texts that discuss the „effect

[165] In addition to the letter about Kafka's anniversary, the collection of Šiklová's prison texts includes her "Plaidoyer"

of Kafka on society“ can originate only in Prague, Kafka’s birthplace. (“That can only come into existence here, in Kafka’s city and birthplace.”) (Ibid 127/284) Šiklová’s formulation follows her description of the parallels between Kafka’s prose and the life in prison, and her reference to the Liblice conference, Goldstücker and the philosopher Karel Kosík. Without the appropriate texts at hand, she recalls the events and their significance from memory. Her words are vague and interestingly ambiguous: does the “effect of Kafka’s work on society” mean the fact that it provoked a hostile official reaction, or does she mean society’s self-understanding and reflection through Kafka’s prose?

Šiklová’s words also echo Goldstücker’s insistence that Kafka should be interpreted from Prague. Šiklová, in the interview, describes that to the residents of the city it meant a lot that Kafka came from Prague, “although there were no traces of Kafka in Prague.” This absence of physical reminders of Kafka in his birth city functioned as a code for those who knew of Kafka, similarly as Kafka’s unpronounced name was a code among prison inmates. Šiklová reminisces about the architectural space of Prague and an experience of *flaneur* in the city under surveillance: “The space, the architectural potentials, the possibility to wander through the passages with the certainty that nobody was following you, the spaces, totally empty, without tourists…” This experience of a reader of Kafka, the identification between the reader, Kafka’s figures and the author himself, legitimizes Šiklová’s testimony. These invocations are reminiscent of Eisner’s claims to understand Kafka following his intimate knowledge of the author’s milieu; although Eisner went much further in claiming that Kafka cannot be understood without familiarity with or at lEast knowledge of the local conditions. Similarly, Janouch’s partly fabricated *Conversations* gained the appearance of authenticity from his local knowledge of the

architectural space of Prague (e.g. the entry about "ghetto inside us"), as much as from his personal acquaintance with the author. These factors were used by Janouch to gain credibility for his book.

Šiklová's reminiscences about the city's architectural space and its connection to Kafka as an author coming from the city are shared by other samizdat authors such as Petr Kabeš and Karel Pecka from the journal *Obsah.*

Kafka's Centenary – The Journal *Obsah*

We do not know the addressee of Šiklová's letter. We do not know whether it reached them, but it certainly was successfully smuggled out and the letter found its way to West Germany, where it was reprinted in German translation in a small collection with various documents related to Kafka's centenary. (Bothmer) We do not know what effect, if any, the letter had. Šiklová is not aware whether her prison letter brought any particular effect.[166] Goldstücker mentions the letter in one of his exilic articles. Goldstücker quotes the beginning of Šiklová's letter and notes that the only commemoration of Kafka's birth was by a Jewish Religious Community in Prague:

> Die einzige Gedenkfeier im Heimatland des Jubilars wurde vom Rat der Jüdischen Religionsgemeinden in der CSSR an Kafkas Grab und einen Tag später im alten Jüdischen Rathaus abgehalten. Vertreter des Museums tschechischen Schrifttums sowie des zuständigen Instituts der Akademie der Wissenschaften haben dabei, ‚ut aliquid fieri videatur', auf das Grab Kränze niederlegt.(Goldstücker 1984a, 61)

[166] Interview with Šiklová.

Goldstücker writes that the British radio sent a journalist to Prague before Kafka's centenary, to prepare reportage from Kafka's birthplace. This journalist allegedly reported that since 1969 nothing was published by Kafka, that it was not possible to borrow Kafka's works in Czech translation in libraries, because they were stolen. Goldstücker quotes this (unnamed) journalist: "Kafka scheint für einige Jugendgruppen eine Art Kultfigur zu sein, ältere Leute sagen aber, sie könnten sich nicht zur Lektüre Kafkas entschließen. Ein älterer Mann drückte es so aus: ‚Kafka ist ein Sozial-Realist mit beschränkter Phantasie. Ich lese ihn nicht, denn ich lebe ohnehin in seiner Welt.'"(Ibid 59-60)

One interesting circumstance contradicts Goldstücker's claim that Kafka's birth was not marked by the official culture. An older, 1964 edition of Kafka's stories translated by Vladimír Kafka were re-issued by the publishing house Odeon in 1983, but with an important difference: Goldstücker's epilogue was replaced by an epilogue written by a less controversial author, Květa Hyršlová.[167] Josef Čermák recalls the circumstances of this publication (Čermák was an editor in chief in Odeon) how they managed to "trick" the authorities in 1983, with the upcoming centenary of Kafka's birth.

> We wrote a letter to the minister of culture saying that experts and admirers of Kafka will come to Prague from around the world, and there will not be any of his books in the shop windows. I recommended to publish the *Trial*, and offered to write an Afterword, if there will not be a more suitable author. In a month, we received an answer: Kafka can be published, but not the *Trial*, as it is allegedly too problematic, and the minister wishes a certain lady to be the author of the Afterword. (Placák 2011)

[167] This collection included *The Contemplation*, "The Judgment", "The Metamorphosis", "In the Penal Colony", *The Country Doctor*, and *The Starvation Artist,*

The publication of the stories, according to Čermák, was a starting point for various other cautious activities involving Kafka, such as theatre performances of some small theatres.

The May 1983 issue of the samizdat journal *Obsah*, a journal published since the late 1970s[168], included essays related to Kafka by Czech authors Petr Kabeš, Karel Pecka, Iva Kotrlá, Ivan Klíma, and a translation of an essay by P. Roth. It is not clear whether there was a link between Šiklová's letter from prison, in which she pleaded for an anthology that would mark Kafka's centenary, and this issue of *Obsah*. The copy of the journal for obvious reasons does not include information about the date of publication, the editors, or the occasion.

One of the texts is the poet's Petr Kabeš's short essay, "Franz Kafka LP 1982-1983". Kabeš quotes Kafka's text from Oktavenhefte as a source for an epigraph for his short essay about his hearing at the Prague's Ministry of Interior in December 1982. The interrogator, Mr. Dvorský, reminded the first person narrator of Kafka's contemporary, the writer Jaroslav Hašek, who was born in the same year as Kafka ("if we already talk about the anniversaries.") There was a long quiet in the room, as the narrator sat across the table from the interrogator.

> And then, without any warning, a slap: Franz Kafka. And I froze. I heard from a friend that his interrogator introduced himself in the course of time by a different name, but now I had to become afraid. Dvorský as Kafka could even peck me. (…) Does it mean anything to you? (…) I said: if you mean the Prague Jewish German writer, then perhaps it does. And he said: he will have an anniversary, as we have established. Did not some Western journalists visit you on that account? No, they did not. Mr. Dvorský was then able to continue that they have established that they want to misuse this anniversary, and that maybe they will still visit me. They (not the journalists) are not against me talking with them (the journalists) about Kafka, but that it would not be good for me if. (…) If I said about Kafka that they are summoning me up like this, that I hold the sort of jobs that I do, that I am not allowed to publish because I signed Charter 77…

[168] The circle of *Obsah* (Content) included the writers Ludvík Vaculík, Ivan Klíma, Milan Jungmann, Karel Pecka, Zdeněk Urbánek, and Eda Kriseová. See: Posset (1993, 73-74.)

This witty passage is based on the unexpected presumption that the Secret Police official, representative of the sort of mechanisms that the Czech readers found realistically depicted in Kafka's prose, transforms into a Kafka, the bird that the Czech word denotes. This bird assumes an ominous quality as he could "peck" the narrator/the one who is interrogated. This metamorphosis is of the sort that is common in Kafka's prose, which often uses the performative function of language. The passage also employs a narrative technique that resembles Kafka's indirect interior monologues, applied here to a comic effect.

Kabeš's essay exemplifies the unexpected appearances, almost haunting, of Kafka in Communist Czechoslovakia, and the strange role they assumed in the communication between the representatives of the power and the dissident writers. Like Šiklová's use of the "safe" Arco/Kafka reference in prison to divert her interrogator's attention from one of her collaborators whose identity had to remain secret, in Kabeš's essay Kafka is not the ultimate point of contestation; it is permissible to talk about Kafka, but not about the repressions applied to dissenting writers in communist Czechoslovakia. The use of allegorical references to Kafka, the use of Kafka as a symbol, was not by itself dangerous or problematic, as long as the communist powers did not understand that they stood for a direct criticism of the system. As the 1983 reissue of Kafka's stories shows, Kafka was at the point less controversial than Goldstücker, the author of the original 1964 Afterword.

Out of the Ghetto

Jirous's wide range of epigraphed authors in a relatively short text serves as a bridge from the ghetto-like situation of the underground community and culture to the wider, Western literary tradition, thus asserting the continuity with these values. Indirectly, it condemns the official normalization culture as provincial, temporary and marginal. It is a different way of ascertaining of the cultural community, as Jirous did by publishing his 1960s samizdat.

Similarly, the samizdat literary journal Revolver Revue chose as one of its mottos "out of ghetto magazine."[169] (In English.) "We wanted to escape — into the world," wrote one of its editors, the writer Jáchym Topol. Their way of "escaping the ghetto" was through translation. "In a country where Henry Miller was last published in 1968 and Louis-Ferdinand Celine in 1947, literary translation represented an enormous territory, an untapped wealth that we pounced on with enthusiasm."(Ibid, 77) Most of Kafka's works had been published in the 1960s, so during the eighties the samizdat translation activities focused on the authors that had never been translated before.

Jirous's use of the word "ghetto" was influenced by the social-culture notion of "urban ghetto" in American cities and the way it entered the American underground music scene. Nevertheless it resonates with the ghetto topos as it developed in writing about Prague German Jewish authors (e.g. Eisner). The samizdat authors of the 1970s (Jirous) as well as its "last generation" (the 1980s generation) did look to the wider world. At the same time, though, the local literary tradition – Prague's non-existent former minority – remained an important point of

[169] Jáchym Topol, „The Story of Revolver Revue." (Příběh Revolver Revue, Příspěvek k lepšímu poznání poslední samizdatové generace.) Trans. Gerald Turner. In Machovec 2005, 91.

reference. Prague German Jewish literature was terra incognita; its authors were as publicly present as the (prohibited) writings of English or French provenance. Moreover, the perception of the hidden, unknown, suppressed, or lost German-Jewish literature from Prague, was particularly important for samizdat authors.

Vratislav Brabenec, the Plastic People of the Universe (PPU) band's saxophone player, recalls in his book-length interview-memoir, the author Gustav Meyrink, and how he perceived Prague's Old Town through his depictions. (Brabenec 2010, 177) In one of their songs, the PPU used the lyric of Egon Bondy: "My žijeme v Praze, to je tam, kde se jednou zjeví, Duch sám." ("We live in Prague it is there where the Spirit used to live once.") In the 1970s and 1980s, these authors draw on the image of Prague as the site of magic, popular in the nineteenth and early twentieth-century tales, stories and novels which dealt with the subject of the Jewish town, ghetto, the Jewish cemetery, and the Golem.

The perceptions of Prague of these underground figures were similar to those of the sociologist Šiklová. Prague was conceived as a space that gave rise to Kafka's protagonists and narratives. The anonymous author of an essay about Prague's cafés in the samizdat journal *Sado Maso* alludes to the Prague German author of occult novels Gustav Meyrink, with whose "occult powers" an image of the "tragic city that gave birth to Kafka's characters" could be raised.[170]

In comparison with Jirous's metaphor of ghetto, Eisner deplored the "spiritual ghetto" that the German Jewish authors erected around themselves, their alleged seclusion from the majority Czech population. Jirous, by contrast, viewed the "parallel life" of the underground as a

[170] "Tour de Caffé – Prague, Pouť po starých pražských kafírnách," *Sado-Maso*, December 83-January 84.

positive, ethical and aesthetic position that enabled their creativity. In both cases we have to consider the metaphoric status of the term "ghetto" as a voluntary seclusion.

Conclusion

Kafka had a major presence in Czech samizdat culture. Ivan Martin Jirous, by copying Kafka's works for a circle of his friends, presents a peculiar type of reading, reading through copying. Šiklová's use of Kafka as a code is continuous with such use in the sixties. Both Jirous and Šiklová engaged in the mission of maintaining cultural continuity in the conditions of communist censorship.

The concepts of author and authority were extremely important in samizdat culture, although the samizdat authors sometimes did not pay much attention to issues of authorship. Kafka played a major role as an author coming from Prague, a circumstance that increased the possibility of personal identification with Kafka as well as his characters by members of samizdat community. Šiklová constructs herself as an authority in her letter from prison about Kafka; in the *Report*, Jirous assumes the voice of a leader of the Czech underground. In their self-constructions, Kafka plays a defining role.

The question of realism was important to the 1960s Marxist readers of Kafka, and it is important to the underground community. As the one time musician of the Plastic People of the Universe Canadian Paul Wilson told me (he played with PPU in the 1960s and early 1970s, before he was expelled from Czechoslovakia after signing Charter 77), the notion that "Kafka

was in fact a journalist," reporting on what he saw, was highly appealing to the circle of Jirous and the Plastic People.[171]

The samizdat material reintroduces the unexpected topos of "ghetto" in the period of "normalization" in Prague: the "merry ghetto" of Czech underground. Eisner's ghetto resurfaced in the 1970s, transformed and inflected by the usage of the word in American context to refer to the city ghettos, an important source of inspiration for the Czech underground movement.

[171] My interview with Paul Wilson, New York, April 2011. Wilson referred to his conversation with the artist Jan Steklík (b. 1938), member of the underground group *Křižovnická škola čistého humoru bez vtipu*, to which belonged also Ivan Martin Jirous.

Conclusion

I examined four figures crucial for the reception, transmission, and appropriation of Kafka in Czechoslovakia under Communism (1948-1989), including the important "pre-history" of Paul Eisner's interpretations of Kafka in the late 1920s and 1930s. Each chapter focuses on specific reading practices and ensuing theoretical problems: translation (Eisner), authenticity and fabrication (Janouch), literary anticipation and identification, coding and decoding (Goldstücker and Šiklová), and copying, censorship, and samizdat production (Jirous). I analyzed the reading practices as a response to the political and historical changes within Czechoslovakia and also against the background of broader European and trans-Atlantic discourses.

I examined diverse sources, including archival documents and testimonies of the witnesses to the crucial events of the reception of Kafka and direct participants. Some of these sources are in Czech and had been previously examined merely within the Czech literary and historical discourse.

I combine historical research with literary analysis and discuss underlying issues of literary interpretation: Eisner and Janouch legitimized their interpretations of Kafka by a physical or personal proximity to Kafka or Kafka's milieu, while to Goldstücker, "closeness" to Kafka was ascribed by Western intellectuals. Jirous "identified" with Kafka's texts perhaps in the most literal sense, while copying them over many months on his typewriter, as a service to his small community of friends at the time when Kafka's works were not widely available.

The mutual perceptions and misperceptions between East and West were addressed in all four chapters. Eisner's ghetto topos was received by Western scholars (via 1958 Wagenbach's monograph on Kafka), and it is strongly present in Deleuze and Guattari's influential 1975 book *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, though it did not refer to Eisner. Janouch's *Conversations* were published in West Germany in 1951, and only sixty years later in Czech. This delayed reception cannot be attributed merely to the Communist censorship, as it was with texts by Kafka and many other authors, both Czech and foreign. The reception of Janouch's book was much more welcoming in the West than by Czech scholars who dismissed him early on as "fraud." Goldstücker wrote his memoir, *Prozesse* (1989), in exile and for Western audience; the Western readers perceived him as a victim of Communist show trials and valued him as a reform-minded Marxist who exerted himself to gain Kafka for socialism; in Czechoslovakia, he was perceived as much more controversial due to his testimony against Slánský and his overly cautious behavior in the 1960s. Samizdat publications and culture are not well known in the West. They fall victims to excessively simplistic views that considered them as "islands of truth" in older scholarship, as well as to inspiring and interesting attempts to consider them within contemporary critical theory at the cost of loss of some of samizdat's unique and complex qualities.

I showed that the reception of Kafka in Eastern Europe was more diverse than often assumed by the Western critics; Kafka was not merely a "prophet of totalitarianism," as he was viewed by Western critics. The "Czech" Kafka, I argued, appealed to Czechs not as much for his depictions of mechanisms of control and power, as for what they viewed as his "self-tormenting search for the truth," in Goldstücker's words. Czech intellectuals appealed to him in questions of

personal integrity and identity. Interestingly, this was also the reading of the younger generation of dissidents during the so-called normalization. While the 1960s were concerned with the conceits of mask, demasking, unveiling, and masquerade, with "two faces of reality," the 1970s fierce opponents of the oppressive regime (such as Jirous) took as their motto Kafka's aphorism, to articulate their civic position. The Czech readers filled gaps in Kafka's inherently open texts; the author appealed to them for his perceived integrity, although in their own work writers such as Havel and Grossman explored precisely the opposite, the disintegration and loss of identity

A significant discovery of my research was that in addition to gaps and disruptions, there were also surprising continuities both in the publication of Kafka (in samizdat) and in his interpretation (the transformation of the ghetto topos), from the democratic 1920s to the Stalinist, coerced provincial 1950s, to the gradually reformist 1960s, and the "normalization" 1970s and 1980s. Ideas resisted the radical and drastic political and social changes, persisted, and revealed themselves to be more permanent than the institutional environment within which they existed.

The survival of Eisner's ideas, especially his ghetto topos, from its origins in multi-cultural Prague, through the Holocaust and the expulsion of the Germans from Czechoslovakia and the Stalinist fifties, to be published by young Škvorecký's Czech journal, and transmitted to the world posthumously through Wagenbach to Deleuze & Guattari, and yet survive in a transformed form in the thought of the dissidents of the normalization years can only be matched by Eisner's personal survival and his ability to go on writing and translating through it all. Eisner's personal and literary survival, albeit on the margins, allowed for the transmission of perspectives, ideas, and texts that originated in Prague of the 1920ies, to mono-ethnic and Stalinist Czechoslovakia and beyond. Eisner's services to letters as a translator, promoter, and

interpreter of Kafka, were indispensable. I noted nevertheless some intrinsic weaknesses in Eisner's triple ghetto thesis. As some critics noted, the Prague German-Jewish authors were not as isolated as he put it either linguistically or socially. As Eisner's own autobiography demonstrates, identities could be more fluid than traditional nationalistic constructed ideologies allow for.

I examined at some length Eisner's translation of *The Trial* and the changes he made for the 1958 eventual publication. The translation reflected Eisner's bilingual predicament and his conscious, active engagement with his two languages. Eisner made bold, deliberate lexical changes that were not faithful to the original, but resulted from his intense engagement with the Czech language, its literature and Czech history, and Czech experimental prose. Still, Eisner's translation was at times very literal and close to Kafka's German. Eisner attempted to implement his ideas of symbiosis between the German and Czech languages in his translation by making the readers aware that they were reading a translation into the Czech language with its history and peculiarities, rather than aiming at transparency. The very publication of this translation in 1958 attests to the continuities in the Czech culture and language that transcended the political changes. Rather than being either an insider or an outsider, or in the margins, Eisner occupied a luminal space between visibility and invisibility.

Goldstücker's picked up where Eisner left off in understanding Kafka through the peculiarities of his Prague social context. Goldstücker however interpreted this context in Marxist terms rather than ethnic, national or linguistic categories. Goldstücker was careful not to step beyond the permitted party line; his Secret Police files show that he was under constant surveillance by the Secret Police. Like Eisner, Goldstücker too was a survivor. Unlike Eisner, his

survival was traumatic; he attempted to come to terms with his past, to create cohesion. In his memoir, Goldstücker came to interpret his own life and what he had to go through during the Slánský trials through Kafka's *Trial*. This reading of his own life as K., this attempt to reach self-understanding and meaning in a politically meaningless universe, can be understood against the background of Brod's "religious" interpretation of Kafka as a secular prophet. While in exile, Goldstücker wrote a letter of protest to the Czechoslovak Minister of Interior, in which he compared himself to the martyr Jan Hus.

In the 1963 conference at Liblice that Goldstücker co-organized, "Kafka" came to symbolize reforms, liberalization and an openly critical approach to the Stalinist past. The "rehabilitation" of Kafka came to symbolize the victory of the reformed wing of the Communist Party. I traced this symbolic meaning of Kafka back to Sartre's speech at a peace conference in Moscow and examined the criticism of Goldstücker and the conference both from the side of orthodox Marxists who posited the constructed heroic figure of Fučík as the opposite, positive alternative to what they considered Kafka to symbolize, and from the side of liberal Marxists or non-Marxists who interpreted the conference as an internal Communist affair that did not even begin to come to terms with the crimes of the Stalinist era and did not attempt a non-Marxist, non-political, indeed anti-political, reading of Kafka.

Outside of Czechoslovakia, West European readers welcomed Goldstücker not for his complexity, not as the former Zionist Slovak Jew who became a Communist and was coerced to bear false witness against his personal patron within the Communist Party, Slánský, but as a German-speaking Jew with progressive views who fell victim to the oppressive regime, not quite unlike the universe of Kafka's fiction.

Similarly, Western and Eastern readers of Janouch's *Conversations with Kafka* had diverging reactions. For Western readers, he was a link to Kafka the man, the secular prophet. Whereas Kafka left no testimony to his political opinions, Janouch provided a progressive Kafka with a social conscience who could guide his readers through life and the Prague landscape and sights wisely and patiently. The simple aphorisms appealed to seekers of wisdom. By contrast, Czech readers Goldstücker and Čermák considered him with sarcasm, simply as a forger. I suggested to consider Janouch's book a pastiche, an amalgam of personal memories, cultural-historical references, and fiction that can be evaluated by itself without having to fall into simple categories of forgeries or pranks. Janouch professed his allegiance to Kafka the man rather than the writer and refused to read most of his works. He nevertheless committed his own bits of memories of Kafka to paper, calling them a document.

A last type of cultural and ideational continuity from Kafka to the late 1980s in Czech culture has been through the medium of samizdat. I challenged previous attempts to characterize samizdat and attempted to show that samizdat represented cultural continuity and is not so far away from the Western modern print (and its functions) as some recent studies suggested (Komaromi). The non-standard features of samizdat must be attributed to precaution, rather than to a dramatically different understanding of authorship from that in the modern Western print. In the 1960s, people like Jirous copied texts they liked but were unavailable, for their friends. Institutionalized and rigorously managed for wider circulation such activities became a samizdat industry in the 1970s and 1980s.

Kafka was important for the samizdat underground culture as a role model to identify with and model one's activities after. In prison he served as a shibboleth to forge allegiance

between prisoners. He served as a code in the process of distribution of samizdat and exilic books, and as a code to distinguish "us" from "them." This implied a reading of Kafka that was used as an antidote to both the older socialist realism and the new normalization era state industry, but also an antidote to the 1960s readings that sought to distinguish between façade and the reality beyond it. Though of all the people mentioned only Eisner did not serve time in prison, his topos of the ghetto, transmitted to them perhaps indirectly, caught the imagination of the underground during normalization, interpreted through the American meaning of ghetto as a sub-culture rather than a religious, national and social enclave that should not have existed in the first place and whose denizens wished to escape. While Eisner sought to condemn this phenomenon, it was embraced by the underground as a merry ghetto of life in truth.

New Directions

While attempting to answer some questions about the reception of Kafka in Czechoslovakia, this research also opened many new questions. Undoubtedly, Kafka exerted a strong influence on Czech literature and culture. Many of the details nevertheless still remain unknown though there may well be archival evidence that may change the current picture: The publication history and the print runs of Kafka's translations, as well as the editorial and political decisions that led to them are unkown. The archives of the state publishing houses are paritally preserved though uncatalogued. If relevant documents are discovered, it may be possible to discover who helped the publication of Kafka's works, and who resisted it. This may change our current evaluation of Goldstücker's role in the rehabilitation of Kafka. Referee comments, if

found, may offer a window on the contemporary view of Kafka. The same archives may shed light on the publication or non-publication decisions regarding other modernist writers and then allow a comparison between the decisions to publish Kafka and to publish translations of other modernist authors. How unique was Kafka?

The large impact of Kafka on Czech literature, theatre, and film, has been noted, (French, 1982; Kosková, 1999) but very few critical studies have been devoted to the intertextual relationships between Kafka and authors such as Hrabal, Havel (who repeatedly articulated his indebtness to the Prague author), Ivan Klíma, Věra Linhartová, Emanuel Mandler, and others, the films of the New Wave, and the famous theatre adaptation of *The Trial* by Jan Grossman in *Divadlo na zábradlí.*[172]

The personal history of Janouch and how it affected his writings could benefit from rigorous critical study of all the sources that could culminate in a fascinating literary and political biography. The role of mediators between the languages and their fluid identities requires further study. As I noted, a dismissive instrumental approach to translators and other mediators prevailed until recently among scholars. Each of the mediators studied in this dissertation could be the topic of a fascinating monograph.

Further analysis awaits the East-West connection. How did Kafka figure in the *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* of West German authors (a topic that I merely touched upon in my chapter on Goldstücker and the Liblice conference)? How was the experience of reading Kafka

[172] For a noted exception see:: Susanna Rothová, „Bohumil Hrabal – a Kafka?“ *Kritický sborník* 3/1990, 38-41.

in West and East Germany, which in the recent past had experienced a radical break not entirely different from that caused by the Stalinist Communism in Czechoslovakia?

The study of the reception of Kafka reveals many surprises, paradoxes, gaps, and unexpected turns. The Communist President Novotný wrote about Kafka in his memoir, and the Secret Police interrogated Czech writers about upcoming Kafka's centenary. The dissident sociologist Šiklová used Kafka's character as a code in prison, and the son of one of Goldstücker's comrades offered his moped in exchange for Kafka's novel. Much more can be learned from a further study of the reception of Kafka in Eastern Europe. Ultimately, a more theoretical consideration could help us gain further insight into Kafka's works and their infinite interpretive potentials.

Bibliography

Ackermann, Ulrike (2000) *Sündenfall der Intellektuellen*. Ein deutsch-französischer Streit von 1945 bis heute. Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta Verlag.

Adorno, Theodore (1955) „Aufzeichnungen zu Kafka“, In: *Prismen, Kulturkritik und Gesellschaft,.* Berlin: Suhrkamp (geschr. 1942-1953, publiziert in *Die Neue Rundschau*, 1953). Reprinted in: Liebrand, Claudia (Hg.) (2006) *Franz Kafka. Neue Wege der Forschung*, Darmstadt: WBG (Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft), 21-33.

Anders, Günther (1951) *Kafka. Pro & contra: Die Prozessunterlagen, Munich:*.C.H. Beck.

Anderson, Mark Ed. (1989) *Reading Kafka. Prague, Politics, and the Fin de Siècle.* New York: Schocken Books.

Anderson, Mark (1992) *Kafka's Clothes. Ornament and Aestheticism in the Habsburg* Fin de Siècle, Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Arendt, Hannah (1994) „Franz Kafka: A Revaluation.“ in *Essays in Understanding, 1930-1954.* Ed. by Jerome Kohn. York: Harcourt Brace & Company, (Essay originally published in *Partisan review*, XI/4, 1944), 69-80.

Barthes, Roland, DATE *Camera Lucida*, *Reflections on Photography.* Trans. Richard Howard. NY: Hill and Wang,

Bathrick, David, (1995) *The Powers of Speech. The Politics of Culture in the GDR,.* Lincoln NE: University of Nebraska Press.

Bauer, Michal (2003) *Ideologie a paměť. Literatura a instituce na přelomu 40. a 50. let 20. století,* Praha: H+H.

Berlin, Isaiah (1969) “Historical Inevitability,” in *Four Essays on Liberty*, Oxford: Oxford university Press, 21-117.

Binder, Hartmut, (1979) „Gustav Janouch's ‚Gespräche mit Kafka,‘ *Kafka-Handbuch, Band Das Werk und seine Wirkung,* Stuttgart: Kröner, 1979. 554-562.

Binder, Hartmut (2000) „Paul Eisners dreifaches Ghetto. Deutsche, Juden und Tschechen in Prag.“ In: Michel Reffet (ed.), *Le monde de Franz Werfel et la morale des nations*. *Actes du Colloque Franz Werfel a l'Universite Dijon. 18-20 mai 1995.* Bern : Peter Lang, 17-137.

Blaive, Muriel, (2001) *Promarněná příležitost:* Československo a rok 1956.*Trans.* Marcela Poučová *, Praha: Prostor.*

Blaive, Muriel (2009) "The Cold War as a Western Concept: From a Historical Victory to a Belated Victory in the Minds." Paper delivered in International Conference: Beyond Cold War Linearities: Entangled Histories and Interactive Ideas. December 9-10, OSA Archivum, Budapest.

Blažíček, Přemysl, (1995) „Katedrová věda". In: *Tvář*, ed. Michael Špirit, 53-59. (Originally 5/1965. No. 5, May).

Bothmer Hermann v., Ed. *Antworten. Zum hundertsten Jahrestags der Geburt Franz Kafkas am 3. Juli 1883*. Hannover: Selbstverlag.

Brabenec, Vratislav (2010) *Evangelium podle Brabence.* Interviewed by Renata Kalenská, Praha: Torst.

Brod, Leo (1980) „Erinnerungen an Gustav Janouch (1903-1968)." *Neue deutsche Hefte.* 167, Jhg. 27, Heft 3, 523-525..

Brod, Max (1922) „Der Dichter Franz Kafka," in: *Juden in der deutschen Literatur. Essays über zeitgenossische Schriftsteller.* Ed. Gustav Krojanker. Berlin: Welt Verlag, 1922. 55-63.

Brod, Max (1966) *Der Prager Kreis*, Stuttgart: Kohlhammer Verlag.

Brod, Max (1991) *Franz Kafka. Eine Biographie*. In: *Über Franz Kafka.* Frankfurt: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag,, 11-222.

Bullock, Marcus (1989 June-Dec) "Telling Lies about Joseph K.: Translator, Traducer, Traitor". *Journal of the Kafka Society of America* 13, no. 1-2,. 4-17.

Corngold, Stanley, (2006) *The Lambent Traces,* Princeton: Princeton Universty Press.

Corngold, Stanley (2002) „Kafka's later stories and aphorisms."in *The Cambrdige Companion to Kafka.* Julian Preece ed., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 95-111.

Crowley, David and Susan E. Reid, eds. (2002) *Socialist Spaces: Sites of Everyday Life in the Eastern Bloc.* New York: Berg.

Cuddon J.A., Preston, C.E. (Eds). (2000) *The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*, New York: Penguin.

Čermák, Josef (2000) Doslov k českému vydání biografie Maxe Broda (Praha: Nakladatelství Franze Kafky.

Čermák Josef (1989) „Die tschechische Übersetzung von Der Verschollene und Franz Kafka“ *Journal of the Kafka Society of America* 13, no. 1-2 (1989 June-Dec), 18-27.

Čermák, Josef (1991a)„Zmarněná příležitosť”. *Literární noviny*, November 14th, 1991, 14.

Čermák, Josef (1991b)„Zmarněná příležitosť”. *Literární noviny*, November 28th, 1991, 12.

Čermák, Josef (1997) „Proces: genese, uspořádání, edice.“ In Franz Kafka, *Proces,* trans. Josef Čermák, Praha: Nakladatelství Franze Kafky, 269-287.

Čermák, Josef (2000) “Recepce Franze Kafky v Čechách,” *Kafkova zpráva o světě*,Conference Proceedings, Praha: Nakladatelství Franze Kafky, 14-37.

Čermák, Josef (2005) *Franz Kafka, výmysly a mystifikace*. Praha: Gutenberg.

Čermák, Josef (2005b) „Kafka a naivní obrazoborectví.“ *Lidové noviny*. 2005, Vol.18, No. 194, 9.

Čermák, Josef (2008) Prahou Franze Kafky. Praha, Albatros. 2008.

Černý, Rudolf (1992) *Antonín Novotný: Pozdní obhajoba*. *Hovory s mužem, který nerad mluvi.*1. vyd. *Praha:* Kiezler Publisher.

Černý, Rudolf (1998-1999) *Exprezident. (Vzpomínky Antonína Novotného.)* Vol. 1-3, Divišov: Orego.

Dannof, Brian (2000) „Arendt, Kafka, and the Nature of Totalitarianism.” *Perspectives on Political Science, Vol 29. No. 4, .211-218.*

Deleuze, Gilles and Felix Guattari (1975) *Kafka. Toward a Minor Literature*. Trans. Dana Polan. Minneapolis, University. of Minnesota Press.

Demetz, Peter (2004) “On Marek Nekula *Franz Kafka’s Languages.*“ *IWM Newsletter,* No. 86*,* Fall, 23-24.

Doležal, Bohumil (1994) „Bitva o Franze Kafku,“ *Lidové noviny*, June 17.

Doležal, Bohumil (1995) „Avantgardismus jako ideologie.“ in *Tvář*, Michael Špirit ed., Praha: Torst, 194-201.

Doležel, Lubomír (1993) *Narativní způsoby v české literatuře,* Praha: Český spisovatel.

Dubský, Ivan (2003) *Per viam. Stati a eseje,* Praha: Torst.

Dubský, Ivan & Hrbek, Mojmír (1957) „O Franzi Kafkovi.“ Nový život, Vol. 4, 415-435.

Dubský, Ivan & Hrbek, Mojmír (1958) „Kafkův Proces,“ *Květen*, Vol. 11, 620-623.

Eckermann, Johann Peter (1948) *Gespräche mit Goethe*. J.W. Goethe, Gedenkausgabe der Werke, Briefe und Gespraeche. Zuerich: Artemis Verlag.

Eisner, Pavel ed., (1935) *Německé překládání. Teorie a prakse*. Praha: SPF.

Eisner, Pavel (1950) *Kafka and Prague*. Trans.Lowry Nelson and René Wellek, New York: Arts, Inc..

Eisner, Pavel (1957) “Franz Kafka”. *Světová literatura*, No. 3, 109-129

Eisner, Pavel (1974) *Chrám i tvrz*, 2nd edition, Zurich: Konfrontace.

Eisner, Pavel (1992) *Milenky*. Praha: Concordia.

Eisner, Pavel (1996) *Čeština poklepem a poslechem*, Praha: Pražské nakladatelství Jiřího Poláčka B. Just.

Eisner, Pavel (1997) *Chrám i tvrz*, 3rd edition, Praha: . Praha: Pražské nakladatelství Jiřího Poláčka B. Just.

Erbe, Günter (1993) *Die Verfemte Moderne. Die Auseinandersetzung mit dem „Modernismus“ in Kulturpolitik, Literaturwissenschaft und Literatur der DDR*, Opladen Westdeutscher Verlag.

Escher, Georg (2007) “Ghetto und Großstadt. Die Prager Judenstadt als Topos“. In; Rudolf Jaworski/ Peter Stachel, Ed.: *Die Besetzung des öffentlichen Raumes. Politische Plätze,*. Berlin: *Denkmäler und Straßennamen im europäischen Vergleich*, 353-373

Escher, Georg (2009) Paul/Pavel Eisners Kafka-Lektüre und die Literaturwissenschaft.“ unpublished manuscript.

Esselborn, Karl, (1980) „Neuer Realismus,“ in: *Hansers Sozialgeschichte der deutschen Literatur vom 16. Jahrhundert bis zur Gegenwart.* Ed. Rolf Grimminger. Munich, Vienna: Hanser, *460*-469.

Fingerhut, Karlheinz. (1982). „Produktive Kafka-Rezeption in der DDR”. In: Wilhelm Emrich und Bernd Goldmann. *Franz Kafka Symposium 1983*. Mainz: von Hase & Koehler. 277-328.

Fischer, Ernst (1966) *Franz Kafka aus Prager Sicht*, Berlin: Voltaire Verlag.

French, Alfred (1982) *Czech Writers and Politics 1945-1969.* Canberra: Australian National University Press.

Fučík, Julius (1995) *Reportáž, psaná na oprátce.* Ed. Janáček, F. Et al., Praha: Torst.

Goldstücker, Eduard (1963) " "O Franzi Kafkovi z pražské perspektivy 1963," in *Franz Kafka: Liblická konference 1963*. Ed. Eduard Goldstücker, Frantisek Kautman, Pavel Reiman. Praha: ČSAV, 71-86.

Goldstücker, Eduard (1964) *Na téma Franz Kafka. Články a Studie.* Praha: Československý spisovatel.

Goldstücker, Eduard (1966) "Über Franz Kafka aus der Prager Perspektive, 1963" in *Franz Kafka aus Prager Sicht*,, Berlin: Voltaire Verlag, 23-44..

Goldstücker, Eduard (1983) „Kafkův Eckermann?" (K Janouchovým Rozhovorům s Kafkou.) *Ročenka Kritického sborníku,*.

Goldstücker, Eduard (1984a) „Zur Ost-West-Auseinandersetzung über Franz Kafka. In: *Franz Kafka. Nachwirkungen eines Dichters.* Kafka, Miklós Almási ed., Munich: Verlag J. Pfeiffer, 47-61.

Goldstücker, Eduard (1984b) „Zehn Jahre nach der Kafka-Konferenz von Liblice," In: *Franz Kafka. Nachwirkungen eines Dichters.* Kafka, Miklós Almási ed., Munich: Verlag J. Pfeiffer, 62-70.

Goldstücker, Eduard (1989) *Prozesse Erfahrungen eines Meitteleuropäers.* Munich: A. Knaus.

Goldstücker, Eduard (2003) *Vzpomínky. 1913-1945,* Praha: G+G.

Goldstücker, Eduard (2005) *Vzpomínk,. 1945-1968*, Praha: G+G.

Goldstücker, Eduard, Kautman, Frantisek, & Reiman, Pavel eds., (1963) *Franz Kafka: Liblická konference 1963*. Praha: ČSAV..

Grossman, Jan, J. Holý a T. Pokorná eds.(1991, samizdat edition 1988) , *Analýzy.* Praha: Československý spisovatel, 1991.

Grafton, Anthony (1990) *Forgers and Critics. Creativity and Duplicity in Western Scholarship*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Grossman, Jan (1964) "Kafkova divadelnost", *Divadlo,* No, 9, 99-132.

Gruša, Jiří (2004) *Umění stárnout.* Rozhovor s Daliborem Dobiášem. Praha-Litomyšl: Paseka.

Harman, Mark (1996) 'Digging the Pit of Babel': Retranslating Franz Kafka's Castle. *New Literary History: A Journal of Theory and Interpretation* 27, 2, 291-311

Havel, Ivan (1994). "Bermudské tajemství", 220-221. *Revolver Revue* 26/1994.

Havel, Václav, (1999) *Hry,* Praha: Torst 1999.

Hejda, Zbyněk (1995)„K tématu avantgarda a ideologie." *Tvář*, Michael Špirit ed., Praha: Torst. 202-210.

Hermsdorf, Klaus (2006) *Kafka in der DDR. Erinnerungen eines Beteiligten.* Ed. Gerhard Schneider and Frank Horningk. Berlin: Verlag Theater der Zeit.

Holý, Jiří (2007) *Writers under Siege. Czech Literature since 1945*. Brighton: Sussex Academic Press.

Hughes, Kenneth, (1977) „The Marxist Debate, 1963." In: *The Kafka Debate. New Perspectives for Our Time.* Ed. Angel Flores. New York: Gordian Press, 51-59.

Iser, Wolfgang (1970) *Die Die Appellstruktur der Texte: Unbestimmtheit als Wirkungsbedingung literarischer Prosa.* Konstanz: Universitätsreden

Iser, Wolfgang (1976) *Der Akt des Lesens: Theorie ästhetischer Wirkung*. Munich: W. Fink.

Janáček, František, (1995) „Pochybnosti i jistoty." In: Julius Fučík, *Reportáž, psaná na oprátce.* Ed. Janáček, F. et al., Praha: Torst, 301-337.

Janouch, Gustav (1951) *Gespräche mit Kafka. Erinnerungen und Aufzeichnungen*, Frankfurt a. M.: S. Fischer Verlag.

Janouch, Gustav (1959) *Prager Begegnungen.* Leipzig: Paul List Verlag.

Janouch, Gustav (1965) *Kafka und seine Welt,* Wien: H. Deutsch.

Janouch, Gustav (1968) *Gespräche mit Kafka. Aufeichnungen und Erinnerungen*, Frankfurt a. M.: S. Fischer Verlag.

Janouch, Gustav (2009) *Hovory s Kafkou. Záznamy a vzpomínky.* Trans: Eva Kolářová, Praha: Torst.

Jauss, Hans Robert (1969) *Literaturgeschichte als Provokation der Literaturwissenschaft.* Konstanz: Universitätsverlag.

Jauss, Hans Robert (1982) *Ästhetische Erfahrung und literarische Hermeneutik*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.

Jeřábek, Čestmír (1958) Kafkův „Proces" česky. *Host do domu*, 1958/8, 373-374.

Jirous, Ivan Martin (1997) *Magorův zápisník*. Praha: Torst.

Kafka, Franz (1935) *Zámek*, Trans. Pavel Eisner, Praha: Mánes.

Kafka, Franz (1937) *Gesammelte Schriften*, Bd. VI, Tagebücher und Briefe, Ed. Max Brod, Prague: Mercy, 198-217

Kafka, Franz (1953) *Der Proceß*, Frankfurt a. M.: S. Fischer Verlag.

Kafka, Franz (1952) *Briefe an Milena.* New York: Schocken Books.

Kafka, Franz (1958) *Proces*, Trans. Pavel Eisner, Praha: ČS.

Kafka, Franz *(1984). Nachwirkungen eines Dichters.* Kafka, Munich: Verlag J. Pfeiffer.

Kafka, Franz (1998). *Aforismy*. Ed. and trans. Rio Preisner, Praha: Torst.

Kafka, Franz (2002a) *Tagebücher*. Ed. Hans-Gerd Koch, Michael Mueller a. Malcolm Pasley, Frankfurt a. M.: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag.

Kafka, Franz (1992). *Nachgelassene Schriften und Fragmente* II. Frankfurt a. M.: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag.

Kafka, Franz (2002b) *Der Proceß*, Ed. Malcolm Pasley. In Franz Kafka, Schriften, Tagebücher. Kritische Ausgabe. Frankfurst: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag.

Kaplan, Karel (1992) *Zpráva o zavraždění generálního tajemníka.* Praha: Mladá fronta.

Kautman, František (2003) „Osud díla Franze Kafky v českých zemích po roce 1948". *Soudobé dějiny* X/3. 404-415.

Kieval, Hillel J. (2005) "Choosing to Bridge: Revisiting the Phenomenon of Cultural Mediation", *Bohemia.* Volume 46, 15-27.

Klaus, Václav (1994) „Na okraj výročí Franze Kafky," *Lidové noviny*, May 30 .

Kocian Jiří, ed, (2006) *Příručka k československým dějinám 1948-1989.* Ústav pro soudobé dějiny Akademie věd české republiky. Online.

Koch, Hans-Gerd, Ed. (1995)*"Als Kafka mir entgegen kam..." Erinnerungen an Franz Kafka*. Berlin: K. Wagenbach .

Koelb, Clayton (1989) *Kafka's Rhetoric. The Passion of Reading.* Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press.

Koeltzsch, Ines (2009) Úvodem. "Myslet mezi kulturami." *Na rozhraní kultur, Případ Paul/Pavel Eisner.* (Sborník příspěvků přednesených na mezinárodním sympoziu.) Petrbok, V., Kaiserová, K., Dudková, V. (Eds) Ústí nad Labem, Univerzita Jana Evangelisty Purkyně, 9-13.

Koeltzsch, Ines, Michaela Kuklová,& Michael Wögerbauer eds,,(2011) *Übersetzer zwischen den Kulturen: Der Prager Publizist Paul / Pavel Eisner* Wien: Böhlau Verlag.

Komaromi, Ann (2008) "Samizdat as Extra-Gutenberg Phenomenon." *Poetics Today*, 29:4 , 629-667.

Kosková, Helena (1999) „Šedesátá léta – zlatý věk české prózy?" *Zlatá šedesátá.* (Materiály z konference pořádané Ústavem pro českou literaturu AV ČR, June 16-18, 1999) Praha: Ústav pro českou literaturu AV ČR 19-30.

Koubová, Věra (2000) „Těžce dosažitelné nic. O překládání Franze Kafky." *Kafkova zpráva o světě. Praha: Nakladatelství Franze Kafky*, 2000, 48-58.

Koukal, Pavel (1999) "Úvod", in: Mareš, Michal, *Ze vzpomínek anarchisty, reportéra a válečného zločince*, Praha: Prostor.

Krolop, Kurt (2007) „Pavel Eisner und Franz Kafka." In *Kafka a Čechy*, Praha, Nakladatelství Franze Kafky, 7-17

Kryl, Miroslav (2009) "K osudu Pavla Eisnera v době nacistické okupace českých zemí.", in Petrbok, V., Kaiserová, K., Dudková, V. Eds *Na rozhraní kultur. Případ Paul/Pavel Eisner.* Ústí nad Labem: Univerzita J.E. Purkyně, 129-135.

Kubka, František (1959) „Paul Eisner and Pavel Eisner," Na vlastní oči. *Pravdivé malé povídky o mých současnících*. Praha, Československý spisovatel.

Kučera Petr (2009) „Pavel Eisner jako překladatel Elegií z Duina." in Petrbok, V., Kaiserová, K., Dudková, V. Eds *Na rozhraní kultur. Případ Paul/Pavel Eisner.* Ústí nad Labem: Univerzita J.E. Purkyně, 85-95

Kundera, Milan (1986) *L'art du roman.* Paris: Gallimard.

Kundera, Milan (2006) *Kastrující stín svatého Garty.* Brno: Atlantis.

Kusák, Alexej (1966) Bemerkungen zur marxistischen Interpretations Franz Kafkas *Franz Kafka: Aust Prager Sicht*, Ed. Eduard Goldstücker, Frantisek Kautman, Pavel Reiman. Berlin: Voltaire Verlag, 169-180..

Kusák, Alexej (2003) *Tance kolem Kafky*. Liblická konference 1963 – vzpomínky a dokumenty po 40 letech. Praha: Akropolis.

Liehm, Antonín (1968q) „Zoči voči", *Slovenské pohl'ady*.

Liehm, Antonín (1968b) „Slovo má Eduard Goldstücker", *Orientace*, 2, 15-28.

Lopatka, Jan (1995) *Šifra lidské existence,* Praha, Torst.

Lukács, György (1958) *Wider den mißverstandenen Realism*, Hamburg: Claasssen.

Lukeš, Igor (2007) "The Czechoslovak Special Services and Their American Adversary during the Cold War." *Journal of Cold War Studies,* Vol. 9, No. 1, 3-28.

Machovec, Martin ed., (2006) *Views from the Inside. Czech Underground Literature and Culture (1948-1989). Manifestoes-Testimonies-Documents. Texts by Ivan M Jirous, Paul Wilson, Egon Bondy, and Jáchym Topol.* Trans. Paul Wilson and Ivan Hartel. Praha: Ústav české literatury a literární vědy, FFUK.

Machovec, Martin (2009) "The Types and Functions of Samizdat Publications in Czechoslovakia, 1948-1989." *Poetics Today,* 30:1, 1-26.

Macura, Vladimír (1995) „Motáky jako literární dílo". In: Julis Fučík, *Reportáž, psaná na oprátce.* Ed. Janáček, F. et al., Praha: Torst, 281-300.

Macura, Vladimír (1995b) *Zrození zrodu*: *české národní obrození jako kulturní typ*. Jinočany: H&H.

Mandel, Ursula (1990) "Opening The Trial: Some Thoughts on Translating Kafka," *Journal of the Kafka Society of America* 14, 1-2 , 51-55.

Mareš, Michal (1999) *Ze vzpomínek anarchisty, reportéra a válečného zločince*. Praha: Prostor.

Margolius, Ivan (2006) *Reflections of Prague. Journeys through the 20th century.* Chichester: John Wiley & Sons.

Ministerstvo spravedlnosti (1953) *Proces s vedením protistátního spikleneckého centra v čele s Rudolfem Slánským*. Praha: Ministerstvo spravedlnosti.

Mittenzwei, Werner (2004) *Zwielicht. Auf der Suche nach dem Sinn einer vergangener Zeit, Leipzig:* Faber & faber.

Mühlberger, Josef (1981) *Geschichte der deutschen Literatur in Bähmen*, *1900-1939.* Wien: Langen Müller,.

Nezdařil, Ladislav (1985) *Česká poezie v německých překladech*. Praha: Academia

Nekula, Marek (2006) „Mýty kolem Franze Kafky.“ *Host*, 2, 56-57.

Neumann, Gerhard (1981) „Werk oder Schrift? Vorüberlegungen zur Edition von Kafkas ‘Bericht für eine Akademie.‘“ *Jahrbuch für Internationale Germanistik.* Band 11. Bern: Peter Lang, 154-167.

Neumeyer, Peter F. (1963) *The Modern German Novel in England, with Special Emphasis on the Work of Franz Kafka and Thomas Mann*. Doctoral Dissertation, (University of Michigan Microfilms, 1977).

Neumeyer, Peter (1971) “Janouch’s Conversations with Kafka: Some Questions.” *Modern Fiction Studies*, Vol. 17, 555-557.

Pascal, Roy (1956) *The German Novel,.* Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Pernes, Jiří, Foitzik, Jan, Ed. (2005) Politické procesy v Československu po roce 1945 a „případ Slánský“ (Sborník příspěvků ze stejnojmenné konference, pořádané ve dnech 14.-16. dubna 2003 v Praze), Brno: Prius.

Petrbok, Václav (2009) “Pavla Eisnera léta učednická a vandrovní,” in Petrbok, Kaiserová, Dudková, Eds. *Paul Pavel/Eisner, Na rozhraní kultur*, 288-289.

Petrbok, V., Kaiserová, K., Dudková, V. Eds (2009) *Na rozhraní kultur. Případ Paul/Pavel Eisner.* Ústí nad Labem: Univerzita J.E. Purkyně

Pez, “Kafku četl i president Novotný”. *Literární noviny/Orientace*, 17.5.2003.

Placák, Petr (2011) “Toho Picáka mi sem nevěšte!” Interview with Josef Čermák, *Babylon*, 3-4, June 20th, 2011..

Politzer, Heinz (1962) *Franz Kafka, Parable and Paradox,.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Popper, Karl Raymond (1964) *The Poverty of Historicism*, New York: Harper & Row.

Posset, Johanna (1993) *Česká samizdatová periodika 1968-1989.* Trans. Zbyněk Petráček. Brno: Továrna na sítotisk R&T.

Povejšil, *Jaromír* (1992) „K *překladatelské praxi Pavla* Eisnera," *Časopis pro moderní filologii*, 74, 14-16.

Prečan Vilém, ed., (2005) *Kočka, která nikdy nespí/ The Cat who Never Sleeps, Jiřině Šiklové k narozeninám,* Praha: James H. Ottaway Jr.

Preisner, Rio (1965) "K interpretaci – zejména franze Kafky," *Tvář*, 10 (December 1965), 148-171.

Preisner, Rio,(1977) „Franz Kafka und die Tschechen." *Aspekte einer provokativen tschechischen Germanistik.* Teil I, Wurzburg: kafka-Nestroy. Jal-Verlag, 126-222..

Prochazka, Willy (1968) „Jaroslav Hasek, der Vater des braven Soldaten Schwejk,". *The Slavic and East European Journal,* Vol. 12, No. 3, 358-359.

Reiman, Pavel (1958) „Společenská problematika v Kafkových románech." *Nová mysl*, 1, 52-63.

Reiman, Pavel, (2003) „Několik poznámek ke kafkovské konferenci v roce 1963. *Soudobé dějiny* X/3. 416-422.

Reiman, Michal (2003) „Kafkovská konference 1963 prizmatem Alexeje Kusáka." *Zpravodaj historického klubu,* 14, 2003, 19-32

Richterová, Sylvie (1994), "V konferenčním sale..." *Revolver Revue* 26, 236-238.

Robert, Marthe (1985) *Seul, comme Franz Kafka,* Paris: Calmann-Lévy.

Roth, Philip (1985) *Zuckerman Bound,*New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux.

Řehák, Daniel (2009) „V sezóně ropuch je dobře sáhnout si na mramor. Eisnerova protektorátné pozůstalost za života." In *Paul Pavel Eisner*. *Na rozhraní kultur*. Petrbok, Kaiserová, Dudková, Eds. Ústí nad Labem: Univerzita J.E. Purkyně, 137-153.

Sandbank, Shimon, (1989) *After Kafka : the influence of Kafka's fiction*, Athens : University of Georgia Press.

Sartre, Jean-Paul, (1963) „Projev na moskevskem kongresu pro odzbrojeni". Trans. AJL, *Plamen*, 5.

Siebenschein, Hugo; Petr Demetz; Emil Utitz and Erwin Muir (1947) *Franz Kafka a Praha. Vzpomínky, úvahy, dokumenty*, Praha: Žikeš.

Slánská, Josefa (1990) *Zpráva o mém muži*. Praha: Svoboda.
Spector, Scott (2000) *Prague Territories, National Conflict and Cultural Innovation in Franz Kafka's Fin de Siecle,* Berkeley, University. of California Press.

Steiner, Peter (2000) *The Deserts of Bohemia. Czech Fiction and its Social Context.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Steiner, Peter, (2008) "Introduction: On Samizdat, Tamizdat, Magnitizdat, and Other Strange Words That Are Difficult to Pronounce." *Poetics Today* 29:4 , 613-628.

Stromšík, Jiří (1992) „'Kafkarny' – kafkaeske Situationen im totalitären Alltag." In: *Nach erneuter Lektüre: Franz Kafkas Der Process*. Ed. H. D. Zimmermann. Würzburg: Konighausen und Neumann, 269-284.

Šámal, Petr (2004)„Kafka jako politikum." *Česká literatura*, 52/1, 121-126

Ševčíková, Magda (2009) *Funkce kondicionálu z hlediska významové roviny.* Praha: Ústav fomální a aplikované lingvistiky.

Škvorecký, Josef, (1974) "Jak to bylo s Kafkou v Československu." *Telegram* 4, 8-9 .

Škvorecký, Josef (2004) "Franz Kafka, jazz, protižidovská čítanka a jiné okrajové záležitosti." *Mezi dvěma světy a jiné eseje.* Spisy Josefa Škvoreckého, Sv. 21. Ed. Michael Špirit. Praha: Ivo Železný.

Špirit, Michael, Ed. (1995) *Tvář*, Prague: Torst.

Thorlby, Anthony (1976) „Anti-Mimesis: Kafka and Wittgenstein." in *On Kafka: Semi-Centenary Perspectives.* Ed. Kuno, New York: Harper & Row, 59-82.

Toman, Jindřich (2009) "Renarrating the Rabbi and His Golem in Czech." In Alexandr Putík, ed.: *Path of Life: Rabbi Judah Loew Ben Bezalel, 1525-1609,* Prague: Academia and The Jewish Museum,, 314-341.

Tucker, Aviezer (2000) *The Philosophy and Politics of Czech Dissidence: From Patočka to Havel, Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh University Press.*

Tucker, Aviezer (2004) *Our Knowledge of the Past: A Philosophy of Historiography*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Tucker, Aviezer (2007) "Temporal Provincialism: Anachronism, Retrospection and Evidence," *Scientia Poetica*, Band 10, 299-317

Václavek, Ludvík (1993) „Zur Vielschichtigkeit der Kafka-Rezeption in der CSR 1945-1989." In: *Franz Kafka in der kommunistischen Welt.* Kafka-Symposium 1991, Klosterneuburg. Ed. Norbert Winkler, Wolfgang Kraus. Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 144-154.

Václavek, Ludvík (1994) „Zur Rezeption Franz Kafkas in der Tschechoslowakei." In *Kafka und Prag*. Ed. Kurt Krolop and H.D. Zimmermann. Colloquium in Goethe Institut Prague, 24-27.11. 1992. Berlin:De Gruyter, 239-244.

Vajchr, Marek (2001) „Kritika? Interpretace? Už žádné otázky?" *Kritická Příloha Revolver Revue* 21, 17–22.

Venuti, Lawrence (1994) *The Translator's Invisibility. A History of Translation*. London: Routledge.

Veselý, Jiří (2002) "České překlady z německy psané literatury." *Kapitoly z dějin německého překladu*. Ed. Milan Hrala. UK Praha, Nakladatelství Karolinum, 125-135.

Vodička, Felix (1998) *Struktura vývoje: studie literárněhistorické.* Praha: Dauphin.

Wagenbach, Klaus (1958) *Franz Kafka, Eine Biographie seiner Jugend, 1883-1912,* Bern: Francke Verlag.

Wagenbach, Klaus (1989) "Prague at the Turn of the Century," trans. Warren Habib, in *Reading Kafka*: *Prague Politics and the Fin de Siècle* ed. Mark Anderson, New York, Schocken Books, 25-53.

Winkler, Norbert & Wolfgang Kraus eds. (1993) *Franz Kafka in der kommunistischen Welt.* Kafka-Symposium 1991, Klosterneuburg. Wien: Böhlau Verlag.

Winnen, Angelike (2006) *Kafka-Rezeption in der Literatur der DDR.* Produktive Lektüren von Anna Seghers, Klaus Schlesinger, Gert Neumann und Wolfgang Hilbig,. Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann.

Ziem, Jochen (1964)"Dopis z Prahy," "Kafka se stal symbolem potlačovaného slova." *Frankfurter Rundschau,* 23.5.1964.

Zilcosky, John, (2003) "The Traffic of Writing: Technologies of Intercourse in the *Letters of Milena.*" *Kafka's Travels. Exoticism, Colonialism, and the Traffic of Writing.* New York: Palgrave, 153-175

Zimmermann, Hans Dieter, Ed. (1992) *Nach erneuter Lekture: Franz Kafkas Der Process*. Würzburg: Könighausen und Neumann.

Zimmermann, Kurt, (1968) "Die geistigen Vorreiter der Konterrevolution." *Neues Deutschland,* September 10-12.

Žídková, Dagmar (2009) „K recepci díla Pavla Eisnera v populárně-vědeckých lingvistických pracích.", in Petrbok, V., Kaiserová, K., Dudková, V. Eds *Na rozhraní kultur. Případ Paul/Pavel Eisner.* Ústí nad Labem: Univerzita J.E. Purkyně, 229-239.

Žižek, Slavoj (2001) *Did Somebody Say Totalitarianism? Five Interventions in the (mis)use of a Notion*. London: Verso.

Archives:

Literární archiv Památníku národního písemnictví, Prague.

Národní archiv, Prague: Fond Leoš Houska, Fond Nejvyšší soud, Fond Eduard Goldstücker.

Archiv bezpečnostních složek Ministerstva vnitra, Prague: Gustav Janouch, Eduard Goldstücker; HSTD files (censor's office).

Interviews

Josef Čermák, October 2007

Peter Demetz, May 2008

Ivan Dubský, June 2008

Jiří Gruntorád, June 2011

Ivan Martin Jirous, June 2011

Elexej Kusák, June 2008

Peter F. Neumeyer (correspondendence Brod, Janouch, Urzidil, Fischer Verlag), 2007-2008.

Jiřina Šiklová, October 2007

Jindřich Toman, April 2009

Josef Škvorecký, correspondence, 2007-2009

Jindřich Toman, 2009

Paul Wilson, April 2011